South Haven
Tribune

$3

September 21, 2025

Photos by Julie Newell / Tribune Editor

South Haven residents enjoy the warm weather and calm water at the South Beach pier Thursday morning, near a life ring.

South Haven gets update on lifeguard program

Consultants form timeline, suggest funding sources

By JULIE NEWELL
SH Tribune Editor

SOUTH HAVEN — The South Haven City Council has received an update from the government consulting firm that was hired to map out how to bring back the city's lifeguard program.

During a Sept. 13 workshop held at the Northside Marina, Double Haul Solutions Founder and CEO Nate Geinzer led a presentation that showed the progress they have made including a

See **LIFEGUARDS**, page A2

South Haven currently has a variety of safety items on the beach including life jackets, life rings, a flag system and warning signs.

Michigan Gov. Whitmer calls on state lawmakers to finish budget as shutdown creeps closer

By ISABELLA VOLMERT
Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. — Three years ago, the story of Michigan was one of Democratic success. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Democratic state lawmakers held complete control of the executive and legislative branches of government.

This year, the story of Michigan is one of enormous partisan divide.

Partisan politics have resulted in a monthslong legislative stalemate over the state budget that might send Michigan into a government shutdown. Whitmer, who is in her second-to-last year as governor, called on state lawmakers to break the deadlock in a speech Tuesday focused on Michigan's economy.

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Isabella Volmert / AP

Construction workers gather at Michigan's statehouse in Lansing on Sept. 3 to call for a long-term road funding solution as a state government budget deadline approaches.

The standoff has high stakes for Whitmer and the state, which is particularly influenced by broader economic trends in the U.S. It's also a glimpse at partisan politics reaching far beyond Washington, D.C., that are grinding a battleground state's Capitol to a halt.

The risks for Whitmer and Michigan

In her most public comments on the stalled budget yet, Whitmer drew a through line from President Donald Trump's wide reaching tariffs to the failed negotiations in Lansing, saying the uncertainty is raising prices and economic stress for families.

Whitmer said the tariffs have hit Michigan's auto manufacturing and agriculture sectors particularly hard. With a federal shutdown

See **BUDGET**, page A4

SH council rejects five-year master plan

City leaders cite three reasons for plan's revision

By JULIE NEWELL
SH Tribune Editor

SOUTH HAVEN — South Haven leadership were given a first look at the city's proposed master plan this week, but sent it back with various revisions.

The South Haven City Council reviewed and voted against adopting the proposed five-year master plan Monday, citing three main concerns.

The first was a request for more details on where manufactured homes and communities could be located in the future land use map. The council asked for the area that includes Bunde's Bakery at 89 North Shore Drive to be classified as residential – not commercial. Lastly, council members asked for the city to specify in the verbiage guarding multi-family residential resort category that the 120 Baseline property is identified as a residential use, as opposed to other types of uses in the future land use category.

Fifteen residents came forward during Monday's meeting to express their concerns about the two properties under the city's microscope, specifically about Bunde's Bakery.

City residents told the council that in the future land use map, the classification of the area the bakery is located was changed from residential to commercial.

"I do not agree with changing the Bunde's Bakery area from labeling non-conforming to commercial," Council Member Joe Reeser said. "I think it opens up the door for more commercial properties and I don't think we need it. We need more residential."

The city council discussed how the majority of residents liked the bakery, but did not want the possibility of more businesses to be put in the residential neighborhood.

While the council agreed that having areas

See **MASTER PLAN**, page A3

SH signs on to energy improvement program

By JULIE NEWELL
SH Tribune Editor

SOUTH HAVEN — South Haven signed on to a participation agreement this week as part of the Retail Energy Improvement Program Project.

The agreement, which was approved by the city council during Monday's meeting, is meant to ensure the city's electric utility complies with Michigan's Energy Waste Reduction requirements.

"This is a state program that is going into effect at the beginning of 2026," Public Works Director Dana Burd said. "What it's purpose is, is to reduce our overall energy usage."

The program requirements include an annual savings target of 1.5 percent of prior year retail electricity sales; program measures must have an average life of more than eight years; low-income program spending should be more than 25 percent of the total program budget; and the city is also required to develop a surcharge to cover that cost of the program.

Burd said the charge for residential customers will be based on the electrical usage, whereas the cost for commercial and industrial businesses will be a fixed per meter charge.

The surcharge will be brought back to city council for approval at a later date.

Other items

The city council approved updates to its shut-off policies regarding non-payment for services.

"We've been working on this electric policy update, it's the first kind of comprehensive update we've done in several years to this," Burd said. "It's a companion to our recent conversation where we created an EV charge rate, the value of solar net metering and the power costs."

The changes included updating language to address remote shut off, updates related to current Michigan law and ensuring the policies align with each other.

"We kind of took the opportunity while we were implementing our rate review to update policy so it's consistent and reflects those rates as well as clean up any language between the two policies that we found were maybe conflicting or out of date," Burd said.

The city council also approved an application to be

See **COUNCIL**, page A2

The Tribune: Celebrating Our 126th Year

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OBITUARIES

Ted Poulton

Jan. 26, 1945 – Sept. 9, 2025

Ted Poulton, age 80, passed away at home on Sept. 9, surrounded by family.

Ted led a life marked by humor, love and a special appreciation for the small, quirky and beautiful things in everyday life. Even Alzheimer's disease did not take away the twinkle in his eye, or the joy and vibrant spirit he shared with those around him.

Born Jan. 26, 1945 in Columbus, Ind. to James and Helen Poulton, Ted's family settled in South Haven before his junior year of high school. There he met Shirley and after their first date on Sept. 15, 1961, they were together for 64 years.

Throughout his life, Ted's passions were many and he took pleasure in sharing new adventures with his friends and family. He caught the sailing bug in the South China Sea while serving in Vietnam and raced with family and friends on his beloved old boat, Pandemonium, for 25 years.

Travel and hiking were frequent joys, with Shirley and Ted embarking on spirited journeys together – full of affection and excitement.Ted could often be found on the Highland Park tennis courts, where his cut shot was legendary.

He was also an incredible dancer, a life-long learner, seasoned Parrot Head, wine enthusiast, and margarita connoisseur. And, if you needed interesting conversation or wise advice, there was no better person than Ted.

Ted loved being a dad and adored being a grandfather. He delighted in all things grandchild – be that changing diapers, imparting wisdom in a way that connected with his young grandkids, attending performances in The Secret Hideout, being a "trouble maker" during nerf gun wars, or building sand castles on the beach. When it was nap time, Ted often "led by example" to get his grandkids to sleep.

Ted found success in many different areas. He was the governor of South Haven High School, the King in "The King and I" and a track stand-out.

After high school, Ted attended the University of Michigan for his undergraduate and master's degrees. There he received the William J. Branstrom Freshman Prize, was a cast member of the Soph Show musical (Fiorello) and treasurer of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity.

Supporting the Grand Haven community was especially important and meaningful to Ted. He proudly served as President of Old Kent Bank in Grand Haven and Muskegon.

Ted dedicated significant time and energy to organizations in the Tri-Cities area, including: GH Association of Commerce and Industry; North Ottawa Community Hospital; GH Rotary Club; Christ Community Church/C3; West Shore Symphony Orchestra; GH Area United Way; Downtown Grand Haven, Inc; Tri-Cities Family YMCA; GHAPS; Highland Park Association and Highland Park Tennis Club.

Ted is survived by his best friend and wife, Shirley (née Hosier) Poulton; children, Timothy (Ginger) Poulton and Lindsay Poulton (Christopher Frett); five grandchildren, Samuel and Oliver Poulton, and James, Isaac and Anna Frett; brother, Nick Poulton (Barbara Howard); sisters, Jane Collins and Carol (Tom) Overhiser; sisters-in-laws, Nancy Hagy and Janet Hosier; much-loved nieces and nephews and many dear friends.

Special thanks to Drs. Ruchira Mehra and Joel Phillips; the entire staff at The Little Red House, Tammi and Darlene of Interim Healthcare Hospice, Matt at CarePatrol and the Friday morning coffee group.

We will gather for a celebration of Ted's life from 2 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 27 at Noto's at the Bil-Mar in Grand Haven, Mich. Casual, beach, or tropical attire are encouraged. The celebration begins with a social hour at 2 p.m. Memories and reflections will be shared at 4 p.m.

The family requests no flowers. In honor of Ted, please consider making a donation and/or volunteering at these organizations: The Little Red House at www.thelittleredhouse.org/ways-to-give/ please note "Ted Poulton Memorial Scholarship Fund of the Little Red House" in your donation; The Grand Haven Schools Foundation at ghsf.org/get-involved/ or the Ottawa County Parks and Recreation Commission at miottawa.org/parks/donate/.

LIFEGUARDS

From page A1

possible projected timeline and options for funding a city-run lifeguard program.

As part of their research, Geinzer said they spoke with other local lifeguard programs, including ones at Silver Beach and New Buffalo.

New Buffalo began rebuilding their lifeguard program in 2019 with an integrated model where the lifeguard covered rescue, prevention, enforcement and education. They also started a junior lifeguard program that helps with recruitment efforts.

During the workshop, Huntington Beach Fire Chief Scott Haberle discussed a possible phased pathway for building a sustainable and scalable lifeguard program.

Under his projections, the program could happen in three phases and be implemented by 2030. The first phase would take place in the 2026 and 2027 summer seasons and would start with staffing South Beach only.

"The phase one is really going to be getting our beachgoers used to something new that most of them haven't seen because it's been gone for so long," Haberle said.

In phase one, there would be four lifeguards working Monday through Thursday and six working Friday through Sunday. Two lifeguard supervisors would be included, as well as one administrative supervisor and one full-time chief.

Phase two would take place in the 2028 and 2029 seasons, with an emphasize on expanding the lifeguard staff. In this phase, South and North beaches would be staffed and expanded to include 10 lifeguards working Monday through Thursday and 14 working Friday through Sunday.

Phase three would focus on achieving USLA's full Program of Prevention benchmark at the North and South beaches.

There would be multiple lifeguards per tower with 18 to 24 lifeguards and this phase would also begin building a junior lifeguard program.

Geinzer gave possible funding options in his presentation, which include parking fees, sponsorships, a special millage and eliminating services and capital investments.

One option Geinzer recommended to help with funding the program was to end free parking passes for residents.

"Every three years, (City Manager) Kate (Hosier)'s staff are stuffing envelopes with over 6,000 parking passes," Geinzer said. "Two per household, but we don't necessarily know which cars they apply that to. That household may only have one car and then they give the other one to a friend."

Geinzer said the 6,000 parking passes are valued at $609,000, which is an expenditure that isn't budgeted for the city.

Another example to help fund the program was eliminating beach enforcement. However, Interim Police Chief Adam DeBoer said getting rid of the beach enforcement program would not be beneficial.

"I think my department probably benefited the most from having them out there," DeBoer said. "They're basically my seasonal police officers now."

Geinzer also discussed using a special millage to fund the program, having sponsorships with local businesses by having advertisements on the lifeguard towers and delaying city projects like the South Beach restroom improvements or the Monroe Bluff Management Plan.

"I don't like the idea at all of taxing or increasing cause for eliminating anything that has nothing to do with beach safety," Council Member Joe Reeser said.

Geinzer concluded the workshop after a brief time for the city council members to ask questions and go over next steps.

The workshop comes after the city council approved its $45,000 consulting contract with Double Haul Solutions in June, which includes a scope of work proposal that outlines the steps they will take to develop a lifeguard program.

"Our point as professionals is to point out the information that we believe you need to know to make this decision (and) how to move forward in a sustainable way," Geinzer said.

For more details, residents can view the workshop presentation slides on the city's website.

Contact: jnewell@southhaventribune.com, 269-637-1104

COUNCIL

From page A1

submitted for a community development grant. The two-year grant program could award $400,000 to distribute to eligible residents to use for critical housing rehabilitation.

City Manager Kate Hosier said the goal is to help 15 to 20 homes with repairs throughout the community. The full application can be viewed on the city's website.

Contact: jnewell@southhaventribune.com, 269-637-1104

The Spotlight
A Weekly Guide To Services & Business Around Town.

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Meet our Pets of the Week, Gobber!

Meet our Pet of the Week, Gobber! At 7 years old, Gobber has perfected the art of being both sweet and distinguished. This handsome fellow may have a scruffy look, but we think it only adds to his charm, like a dapper gentleman with a story to tell.

Gobber came to us thanks to a kindhearted, good samaritan who found him on her property. When he first arrived, he had some old wounds that were healing, but you'd never know it from the way he plays and soaks up attention now. He's proven himself to be a resilient, affectionate boy who's ready for a fresh start and a loving home. Gobber is the perfect mix of laid-back and playful. Whether he's batting at a toy or enjoying a cozy nap, he'll be a loyal companion to whoever gives him his second chance. Submit an adoption survey at al-van.org/adopt today!

PAR 4 PAWS

It's not too late! Sign-up and join us this weekend for Par 4 Paws! Enjoy a fun filled day on the greens and support all the animals here at Al-Van Humane Society. Following golfing there will be a delicious lunch and silent auction. Not able to attend? Visit us online and participate in our silent auction from home! To register or participate in our auction, visit us online at al-van.org/par4paws or give us a call at (269)637-5062.

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SH historical association to host genealogy presentation

By TRIBUNE STAFF

WILLSON

SOUTH HAVEN — The Historical Association of South Haven will host Katherine R. Willson for a special presentation entitled "Genealogy for Beginners" on Sept. 24.

According to a news release, the presentation will take place at 7 p.m. at the Hartman School headquarters located at 355 Hubbard St.

"Willson is a nationally recognized genealogy educator and full-time researcher, specializing in solving complex questions about pre-statehood settlers in Michigan and the broader Great Lakes region," the release sated.

Willson is the founder and past president of the Virtual Genealogical Association, past president of the Michigan Genealogical Council and a former board member of both the Association of Professional Genealogists and the Genealogical Speakers Guild.

Her publications include "The Genealogist's Guide to Grand Rapids, Michigan" in 2018 and Family Tree Magazine's "Research Guide to Michigan" in 2022.

The program is free and open to the public.

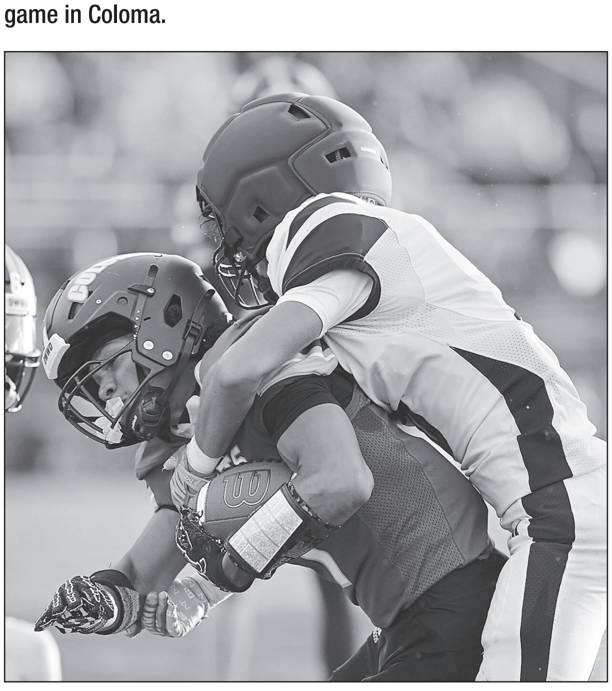
SOUTH HAVEN SPORTS

Photos by Don Campbell / HP staff

Coloma's Dylan Groendyk and Izelle Brown hit South Haven's Jake Bosma during the first half of Friday night's game in Coloma.

South Haven's Quin Hayes passes during the first half of Friday night's game against Coloma in Coloma.

South Haven's Rylan Jenks tries to escape pressure from Coloma's Dylan Groendyk during the first half of Friday night's game in Coloma.


South Haven's Rowan Fonseca hits Coloma's Treyton Myers during the first half of Friday night's game in Coloma.

MASTER PLAN

From page A1

of the city with businesses and residential homes is a good thing, it would not be welcome in that specific neighborhood – with the exception of the bakery.

The council also discussed identifying where manufactured housing could be located in the city.

"The master plan gives no guidance as to where a manufactured housing community might be placed," Council Member Mary Hosley said.

Council members asked City Attorney Dave Eberle whether having a designated classification where manufactured housing could be built would cause issues in the future.

The city council voted to have the three items discussed be part of the statement of objections that will be sent to the city's planning commission for consideration. The planning commission is expected to go over the objections, hold another public hearing and send back a revised master plan to city council for adoption.

Beginning in March of 2024, the planning commission began the process of updating the city's master plan.

The plan was rewritten in 2018 and in December of 2023 the city council accepted a grant from the Michigan Coastal Management Program to update the plan with a resilient, coastal community lens.

Contact: jnewell@southhaventribune.com, 269-637-1104

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CABANA CUTS

Photo provided

The long-standing South Haven business, Cabana Cuts was recently welcomed as a new member of the South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce.

Cabana Cuts offers beauty, wellness services in SH

By TRIBUNE STAFF

SOUTH HAVEN — The long-standing South Haven business, Cabana Cuts was recently welcomed as a new member of the South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce.

According to a news release, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at their location at 530 Phoenix Street in downtown South Haven, where Cabana Cuts' commitment to beauty, wellness and local entrepreneurship was highlighted.

"From stylish cuts and color to special occasion updos, wash and blow-dry styling and waxing – Cabana Cuts helps people look and feel their best," the release stated.

Cabana Cuts opened in 2008 by owner Leslie Carpenter. Nearly 20 years later, the salon continues as a Paul Mitchell Focus Salon, offering a full range of hair and beauty services for clients of all ages.

"Leslie's years of experience, passion for styling and dedication to community engagement make Cabana Cuts a standout in South Haven's beauty scene," the release stated.

The salon's website emphasizes their focus on helping people look and feel their best by stating "Our licensed cosmetologists bring together skill, creativity and advanced education to deliver results tailored to you."

To learn more about Cabana Cuts or book an appointment, go to www.cabanacutslc.com.

South Haven welcomes Boer's Moving & Storage

By TRIBUNE STAFF

SOUTH HAVEN — The South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce recently welcomed Boer's Moving & Storage as a new chamber member.

According to a news release, the chamber hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony for the West Michigan moving and storage company who has nearly a century of service in the community.

"What began in 1929 as Peter Boer's vision to build a better future has grown into one of the region's most respected family-owned moving and storage businesses," the release stated. "From humble beginnings hauling firewood, coal, trunks and luggage from the train depot, Boer's Transfer has expanded into a full-service company."

Boer's Moving & Storage offers local, long-distance and international moving, office relocations, temperature-controlled warehouse storage, self-storage, portable containers and white glove delivery services.

"Their commitment to hard work, grit and customer-first service has remained unchanged since 1929," the release stated.

Today, nearly 100 years later, Boer's Moving & Storage remains family-owned and operated with Peter's grandson, Andrew Boer, leading the company.

"The ribbon cutting ceremony was an opportunity to honor the company's rich legacy while celebrating its continued service to West Michigan as a new member of the South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce," the release stated.

For more information about Boer's Moving & Storage, go to www.boersmoving.com or call 800-433-9799.

Photos provided

The South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce recently welcomed Boer's Moving & Storage as a new member with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Mayflower
Boer's T

Boer's Moving & Storage is a family-owned and operated, full-service company that has been serving the community since 1929.

Lakeshore Harvest Ride raises $50,000 for local trail

By TRIBUNE STAFF

SOUTH HAVEN — Over 400 riders recently braved the early morning showers for 14th annual Lakeshore Harvest Ride.

According to a news release, the ride is an annual fundraising event for the Friends of the Blue Star Trail.

"The Friends are so happy to organize the annual Lakeshore Harvest Ride which attracts visitors to our beautiful area from all over the Midwest, creates economic benefit for our communities and generates funds needed to support ongoing construction of the Blue Star Trail," President of the Friends Clark Carmichael said in the release.

Participating riders had the choice to follow well-marked routes of 15, 25, 45, or 60 miles beginning at either Schultz Park in Douglas, Mich. or the Kal-Haven Trailhead in South Haven, Mich.

"We are so thankful for the riders, the army of more than 125 volunteers and certainly our lead sponsor Cottage Home, primary sponsors the Saugatuck Douglas Area Convention & Visitors Bureau and Meijer and 40 additional sponsors who made this event financially successful." Lakeshore Harvest Ride Chair Jack Eisinger said in the release. "Our early estimates indicate we raised more than $50,000, a new record, in support of the Blue Star Trail,"

Photo provided

The annual Lakeshore Harvest Ride is a fundraising event supporting the Blue Star Trail which will run from South Haven to Saugatuck.

Along the routes riders had the opportunity to visit participating vineyards, a cider mill, art studios and farm stands. Riders could also utilize the complimentary concierge service to deliver purchases back to their starting points for any purchases made along the way.

"The riders also enjoyed a wholesome lunch at one of three locations, a selection of snacks and water at various stops along the routes, SAG mechanical support and enthusiastic support for the riders along the way," the release stated.

Eisinger said in the release that excess sandwiches, fruit and snacks were donated to We Care Community Resource Center in South Haven and Christian Neighbors in Douglas.

"I love riding in the Lakeshore Harvest Ride – we waited until the rain ended then took our time riding 25 miles with multiple stops and tastings along the way," Lakeshore Harvest Ride Marketing Manager Kim Redlin said in the release. "What a special event – with good friends and smiling faces and it all benefits the Blue Star Trail that will connect us all."

Riders and the Friends of the Blue Star Trail were expecting the north section of the trail through Saugatuck to have been completed by now.

"The stakeholders believe that section is substantially funded," Carmichael said in the release. "It just awaits resolution by MDOT of concerns raised by the Gun Lake Tribe, which we anticipate will occur yet this year. When complete there will be over four miles of contiguous trail running from Douglas north to connect to the Beeline Trail."

Carmichael said in the release that significant progress has been made on the section of the trail going south from Douglas. This will add three more miles to the trail.

"We expect to learn in November if the Van Buren County Road Commission receives conditional approval of a Transportation Alternatives Program grant to help fund a new trail section from the Kal-Haven Trail north to Baseline Road in South Haven," Carmichael said.

Sea lamprey control planned for Lake Michigan tributary

By TRIBUNE STAFF

PAW PAW — U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently announced that personnel will apply lampricides to the Paw Paw River, that goes through Berrien and Van Buren Counties, to kill sea lamprey larvae burrowed in the stream bottom.

According to a news release, applications will be conducted between Sept. 23 and Oct. 2 in accordance with State of Michigan permits.

Application dates are tentative and may be changed based on local weather or stream conditions near the time of treatment.

"Sea lamprey larvae live in hundreds of Great Lakes tributaries and transform to parasites that migrate to the Great Lakes and kill fish by feeding on their blood and body fluids," the release stated. "Failure to kill sea lamprey larvae in streams will result in significant damage to the Great Lakes fishery. Infested tributaries must be treated on a regular basis with lampricides to control sea lamprey populations."

Extensive preparations and precautions are required to deliver a safe and effective stream treatment.

Prior to treatment, trained personnel collect data on stream water chemistry and discharge. In addition, on-site toxicity tests and stream flow studies may be conducted with non-harmful dyes that cause stream water to appear red or green.

Lampricides are carefully metered into the stream for 12 hours and continually analyzed at predetermined sites to ensure proper concentrations are maintained as they move downstream.

"Applicators are trained and certified by regulatory agencies for aquatic applications of pesticides," the release stated.

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency and Health Canada Pest Management Regulatory Agency have reviewed human health and environmental safety data for lampricides and concluded in 2003 that the lampricides (Lampricide and Bayluscide) pose no unreasonable risk to the general population and the environment when applied at concentrations necessary to control larval sea lampreys.

"However, as with any pesticide, the public is advised to use discretion and minimize unnecessary exposure," the release stated. "Lampricides are selectively toxic to sea lampreys, but a few fish, insect and broadleaf plants are sensitive."

Persons confining bait fish or other organisms in stream water are advised to use an alternate water source because lampricides may cause mortality among aquatic organisms stressed by crowding and handling.

Agricultural irrigation must be suspended for 24 hours during and following treatment.

Under the Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission is responsible for developing and implementing sea lamprey control through the Great Lakes basin, which it does through contractual arrangements with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

"The commission initiated chemical control of sea lampreys in 1958," the release stated. "Since that time, the highly successful program has contributed significantly to the maintenance of the $7 billion Great Lakes sport and commercial fisheries."

For additional information in the U.S. call 1-800-472-9212 and in Canada call 1-800-553-9091.

TTY users may reach the Marquette or Ludington Biological Stations through the Michigan State Relay Service at 1-800-649-3777.

Van Buren County 4-H to host tractor, truck or treat event

By TRIBUNE STAFF

HARTFORD — The Van Buren County 4-H is getting an early jump on Halloween trick or treating by hosting the third annual Tractor, Truck or Treat event.

According to a news release, the free event will take place from 1 to 3 p.m. on Oct. 4 at the Van Buren County Fairgrounds.

"The event is like touch-a-truck meets trunk-or-treat," West Valley 4-H Livestock Key Leader Amy Mortimore said in the release. "What a better way to celebrate 4-H and children."

Treaters can decorate a tractor, truck, emergency vehicle or farm equipment that will be used to distribute treats to children.

"The Fairgrounds has lots of room to spread out and allow for large vehicles," Event Coordinator Denise Noble said in the release. "We are excited for our third year, with many returning vehicles and some new ones, including the Lions Club sight testing unit. We will also have several food trucks."

Businesses, organizations and truck owners can sign up to pass out candy to children at the Van Buren County Fairgrounds, located at 55670 CR 681, Hartford, Michigan.

To register a vehicle, email v.voyagers@yahoo.com.

Fall festival to bring family fun to Hartford

By TRIBUNE STAFF

HARTFORD — The Greater Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce and the Hartford Public Library recently announced they will host the Hartford Fall Festival.

According to a news release, the two-day community event will take place from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sept. 27 and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 28 at the Hartford Public Library, 12 Church Street, Hartford, MI 49057.

The event will include:

- Craft and Merchandise Vendors – Unique, handmade and local goods.
- Food Vendors – Delicious treats for every taste.
- Book Sale – Browse and buy books.
- Apple Vendor – Fresh, local apples to kick off the season.
- Touch-A-Truck – Explore vehicles up close.
- Children's Fingerprinting – Provided by the Van Buren County Sheriff's Department from noon to 2 p.m. on both days.
- Bounce House
- Family Fun Booth – Games and activities.

"This event is all about bringing the community together," Hartford Fall Festival Chairperson Patty Schroeder said in the release. "There's something for everyone – from great food and shopping to free activities for kids."

Admission is free and all are welcome.

For more information, contact the Hartford Public Library at 269-588-5103 ex 2, email hartfordmichamber@gmail.com or visit the Greater Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce website at www.hartfordmichamber.org.

Vance makes offer to Gov. Gretchen Whitmer: Want the National Guard in Detroit?

By SUMMER BALLENTINE and GRANT SCHWAB
The Detroit News (TNS)

HOWELL — Vice President JD Vance offered to ship National Guard troops to Detroit during a Wednesday rally at a Livingston County stamping plant.

"Gretchen, we are happy to send the National Guard to Detroit, Michigan," Vance said, referencing Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

Vance added: "Part of making this country work for you all is making sure you're safe in your communities and safe in your streets."

Detroit had the second-highest violent crime rate among major U.S. cities in 2024. It ranked behind only Memphis, which is expected to receive National Guard troops in the coming weeks after President Donald Trump signed an order directing the move Monday.

Asked about troops potentially coming to Detroit, a spokesperson for Mayor Mike Duggan previously pointed out that violent crime has declined in recent years, including to the lowest number of homicides in 60 years.

"In 2025, Detroit is seeing the fewest homicides, shootings, and carjackings it has in more than 50 years," said John Roach, a spokesperson for Mayor Mike Duggan.

Roach did not immediately reply to a request for comment on Vance's proposal to send the National Guard to the city.

Whitmer's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Vance's remarks.

Jessica Koscielniak / Pool / Getty Images / TNS

Vice President JD Vance disembarks Air Force Two on Wednesday in Lansing. Vance visited a metal stamping factory in Howell.

The National Guard came almost two weeks after Republican U.S. Senate hopeful Mike Rogers of White Lake called on Detroit's mayor to ask President Donald Trump for federal help to "Make Detroit Safe Again."

"It's about time that they acknowledge that Detroit needs them, too," said Michelle Davis, a Hatch worker who lives in Owosso, about the National Guard. She said she last visited Detroit in April to see an AC/DC rock concert and was concerned about the number of homeless people living there.

The vice president's comments came before a crowd of hundreds at a metal stamping plant in Livingston County, which was closed for the day for Vance's visit, about a week after the assassination of conservative activist and Trump administration ally Charlie Kirk.

Vance credited Kirk with creating a "movement" that led to both Vance and Trump's election. "An assassin gunned him down for daring to say things that the assassin thought were wrong or shouldn't be said," Vance said of Kirk.

The vice president was a close friend of 31-year-old Kirk, the founder of the conservative political organization Turning Point USA. On Monday, the vice president hosted Kirk's radio show in a sign of support, and last week he transported Kirk's body home from Utah to Arizona aboard Air Force Two.

In addition to memorializing Kirk, Vance used the trip to Michigan to promote the sweeping domestic policy and tax cut package passed by Republicans and signed by President Donald Trump earlier this year. The vice president's remarks followed a tour of a Hatch Stamping Co. plant.

Michigan U.S. Rep. Tom Barrett, R-Charlotte, and Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer joined Vance on the tour and gave remarks introducing the vice president before his speech.

Roughly 200 people gathered to hear Vance speak in the cavernous factory floor, squeezed together next to robots, forklifts and other machinery.

Barrett, asked if the Vance visit would help his 2026 reelection chances in mid-Michigan's competitive 7th District, said it "absolutely" would.

"It shows the commitment that this administration has to the men and women in Michigan, specifically in my district, but across the state and across the country," he told reporters. "Michigan is really representative of the types of folks that we're trying to really help with the working families tax cut."

Republicans on Capitol Hill, including House Speaker Mike Johnson of Louisiana, have tried since returning from a summer recess to rebrand their legislative package. Though it is officially called the One Big Beautiful Act, some GOP members have begun referring to it as the "Working Families Tax Cut Act."

The Democrats' national U.S. House campaign arm, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, denounced Vance's visit to Michigan in a statement.

"JD Vance is parachuting in to lie to Michiganders about Tom Barrett's toxic agenda, because Barrett can't defend giving tax breaks to billionaires and backing reckless tariffs at Michigan families' expense," DCCC spokesperson Katie Smith said.

"Thanks to Barrett and Vance, Michiganders are losing their health care, facing layoffs at their manufacturing jobs, and paying higher prices everywhere from the grocery store to their electricity bills," Smith said, adding that voters would reject Barrett in 2026.

BUDGET

From page A1

looming as the state also faces down a shutdown on the same timeline, Whitmer said that elected leaders must set aside political differences and pass the state's budget before the deadline in a few weeks.

"We can't control the global tariff war, what we can do is make life a little easier Michiganders and reduce uncertainty," she said.

Whitmer has been floated as a potential Democratic nominee for president. But she has taken a less combative approach to her working relationship with Trump compared to other contenders including California Gov. Gavin Newsom and Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker.

At home, her best-known campaign priorities are on the line.

Whitmer's budget package includes what she calls a $3 billion plan creating a sustainable source of funding for roadway and infrastructure repairs. Both of her campaigns for governor were centered on the idea and her catchphrase promise to " fix the damn roads."

Previous policy has fallen short in a few key areas, including funding for local roadways.

The Republican House passed its own road plan with key differences. The Democratic-led Senate has not presented a plan for long-term funding in their budget and have held out on doing so as overall negotiations continue.

"My budget team will continue to participate in all the conversations, but putting up the votes and actually passing the budget is the Legislature's responsibility," she said.

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CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH HAVEN NOTICE OF POSTING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. 170 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR A SERVICE CHARGE IN LIEU OF TAXES FOR DWELLING UNITS FOR LOW INCOME PERSONS OR FAMILIES (LIGHTHOUSE RIDGE APARTMENTS)

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that at its meeting on September 10, 2025, the Township Board received a proposed ordinance entitled "An Ordinance to Amend Ordinance to Provide For A Service Charge In Lieu of Taxes for Dwelling Units for Low Income Persons and Families (Lighthouse Ridge Apartments)," which will be considered for adoption on **October 8, 2025, at 7:30 p.m**., at a meeting of the Township Board at the Township Hall, 09761 Blue Star Memorial Hwy, South Haven, MI 49090. The proposed ordinance would amend the Ordinance to Provide for a Service Charge In Lieu of Taxes for Dwelling Units for Low Income Persons and Families (Lighthouse Ridge Apartments) to remove Section 9, Termination in its entirety.

The proposed ordinance is available in its entirety for public inspection. The proposed ordinance is posted at the office of the Township Clerk, 09761 Blue Star Memorial Hwy, South Haven, MI 49090 and on the website of the Charter Township of South Haven, http://www.southhaventwp.com.

Brenda Bertorelli, Clerk
South Haven Township Hall
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South Haven, MI 49090
(269) 637-3305

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0900 LEGALS

Meeting Synopsis Casco Township Board Meeting Monday, September 15th, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: -Overhiser called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and led in The Pledge of Allegiance.
PRESENT: -Overhiser, Clevenger, Ridley, Campbell & Fleming.
ITEMS APPROVED: -Anti-Noise and Public Nuisance Ordinance
ADJOURNMENT: -8:56 PM
Allan Overhiser, Casco Supervisor
Rachel Ridley, Casco Clerk

SOUTH HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP SYNOPSIS REGULAR MEETING SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

PRESENT: Poole, Bertorelli, Wiatrowski, Lewandowski, and Fisher
ABSENT: DeGrandchamp, Stein
Motion to approve August 13, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes.
Zach Kenreich gave a report for SHAES, Gail Gladney gave a report for VB County.
Motion to approve the Agenda.
Trustee Poole reported that our Zoning Administrator has been working with Samaritas for the housing project. Trustee Wiatrowski reported that 40 inspections have been completed on STR with 3 left to complete. Clerk Bertorelli reported that she met with the attorney for noncompliant homeowners. He recommended the township create an ordinance enforcement officer position.
Motion to adopt Resolution 25-21 to approve creating an Ordinance Enforcement Officer Position.
Motion to Open a Public Hearing on the Fire Millage.
Trustee Poole stated how the numbers for the Fire Millage are calculated. Resident Brian Horan asked questions and received answers.
Motion to Close the Public Hearing.
Motion to Adopt Resolution 25-22 Fire Millage Resolution setting the millage at 3.63 mills.
Motion to Adopt Resolution 25-23 to Introduce Ordinance #170 to Amend ordinance #160 Lighthouse Ridge Pilot. These Pilot guideline changes were requested by MSHDA.
Motion to Open a Public Hearing on Amending the 425 Agreement.
Trustee Poole explained that last month Wayne Pecina was in attendance to ask that his property at 09160 M140 be taken out of the 425 Agreement. There were no questions from the residents.
Motion to Close the Public Hearing.
Motion to adopt Resolution 25-24 to Amend the 425 Agreement removing the Pecina property from the agreement.
Motion to adopt Resolution 25-25 to approve the L4029 for South Haven Township.
Motion to accept the Planning Commission's recommendation to reapprove a PUD for a campground on Phoenix Road.
Reports were received. W.C.Askew from the Road Commission was in attendance and Jean Stein reported for the library.
Motion to approve payment of bills in the amount of $45,479.43.
Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.
Respectfully submitted, Brenda Bertorelli, Clerk

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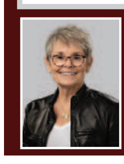

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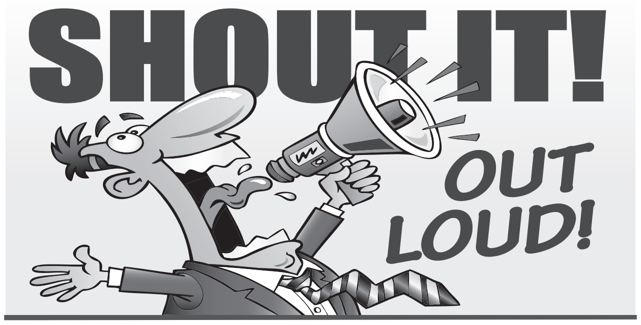
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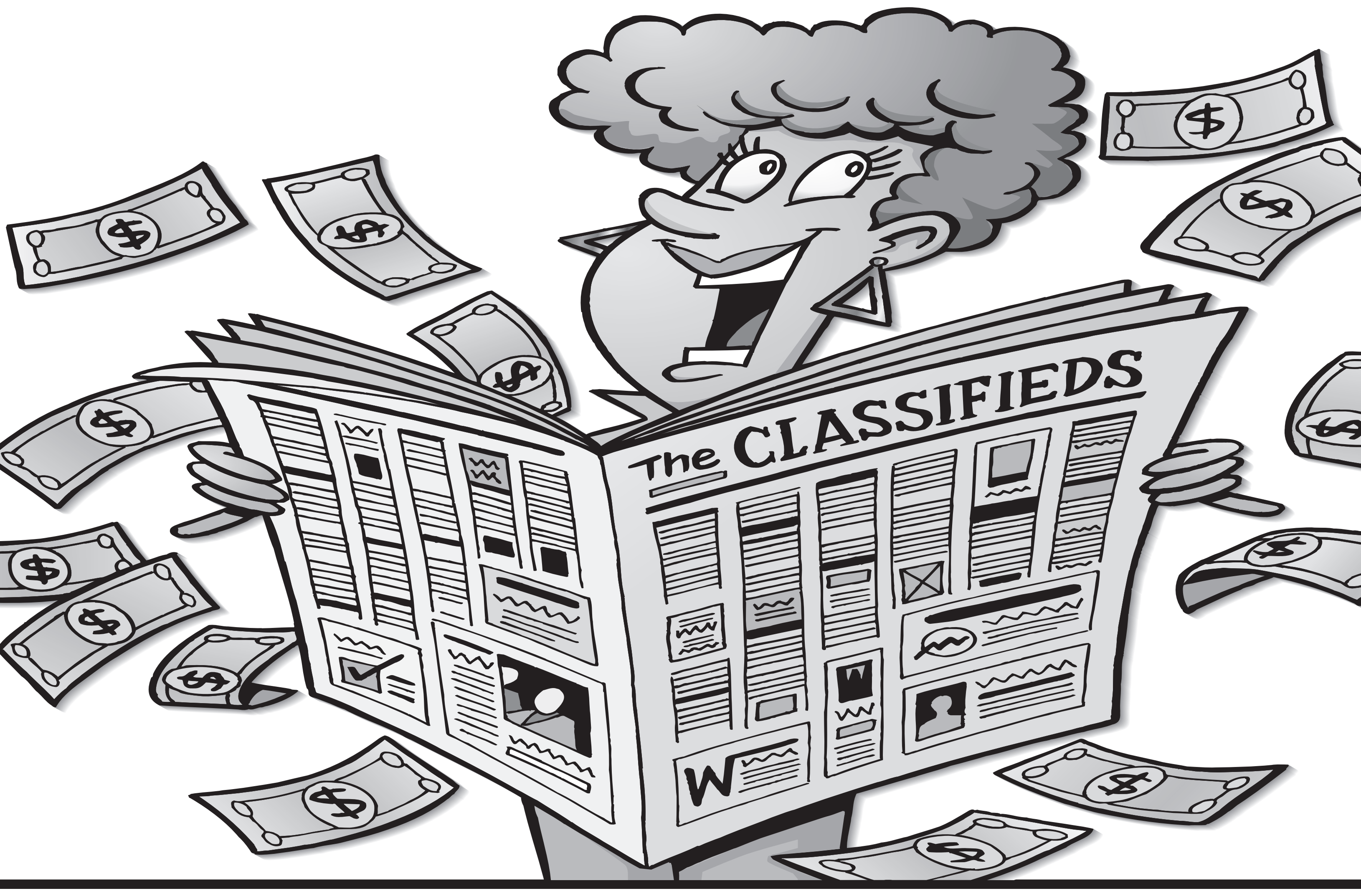

SOUTH HAVEN COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Ongoing events

Visually impaired and blind persons support group meeting: Every third Wednesday of the month at 1 p.m. at Senior Services of Van Buren County.

Dementia and Alzheimer's caregivers support group meeting: Every third Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church library.

Three Blondes Brewing: Trivia night on Thursdays at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 1 p.m. and 2 p.m.

Sparkle and Spice Boutique: Mom and Me play date. Fridays from 9-10 a.m.

South Haven Center for the Arts: Center Studio for adults from 6-8 p.m. on the first and third Wednesday of the month. Artists of any level can bring their own projects to work on. Basic art supplies will be available. Attendees must be 18 years old and over. Members are free, non-members cost $5.

South Haven Center for the Arts: Center Studio for ages 9 to 13 from 4-5:30 p.m. every Wednesday. Young artists are invited to create art at their own pace with an instructor to help guide as needed. Free workshop but a $10 donation is suggested to help cover cost of supplies.

South Haven Center for the Arts: "Altered Consumerism" exhibition from Aug. 8 through Sept. 20.

Candlelight Yoga: Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Church of Epiphany. Cost is $15.

Food pantry: First Congregational Church open from 10 a.m. to noon on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. It is a drive-up food pantry.

Food pantry: Sacred Heart Catholic Church. For Bangor residents only. Open from 1-4 p.m. on Thursdays.

Food, clothing, baby pantry: Lily of the Valley Church in Covert. Open from noon to 2 p.m. on Wednesdays. Must call the central office to register.

Personal care and clothing pantry: First Assembly of God open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays. Must call the central office to register.

Baby pantry: Peace Lutheran Church open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Must call the central office to register.

Baby pantry: Simpson United Methodist Church in Bangor. Open from 10 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays. Must call the central office to register.

South Haven Memorial Library: Story Time on 11 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays starting Sept. 2.

South Haven Farm Market: Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. through October at Huron Street Pavilion.

HawksHead: Pasta on the Patio every Wednesday at 5 p.m.

Michigan Maritime Museum: Hands-on the Harbor every Thursday at 10:30 a.m.

Lake Arvesta: Summer at the pasture concert every Friday and Saturday at 6 p.m.

Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum: New Exhibit – "The Adventures of Liberty Hyde Bailey – Chicago: 1872." Available during museum hours: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday.

Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum: "Stepping Stones" by Carol Trembath and David W. Craig Storywalk. Available through Sept. 31.

Lakeside Social Bowling Alley: Glow Bowl every Friday from noon to 9 p.m.

September

23 – Tennis: Boys varsity against Buchanan High School at 4:30 p.m.

23 – Rotary Club: Club assembly.

24 – Soccer: Boys middle school against Fennville High School at North Shore Elementary School.

24 – Volleyball: Girls middle school against Watervliet High School.

24 – Soccer: Boys junior varsity against Fennville High School at 5 p.m. at Ratcliffe Field.

24 – Soccer: Boys varsity against Fennville High School at 6:30 p.m. at Ratcliffe Field.

24 – Historical Association of South Haven: "Genealogy for Beginners" presentation by Katherine Wilson from 7 to 8 p.m.

25 – South Haven Memorial Library: Night of decoupaging from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

25 – Gingerman Raceway: Track Night from 1:30 to 8:30 p.m.

25 – Volleyball: Girls junior varsity against Martin Public Schools at 5:30 p.m.

25 – Volleyball: Girls freshman against Gobles middle and high school at 5:30 p.m.

25 – Volleyball: Girls varsity against Martin Public Schools at 6:30 p.m.

26 – South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce: Golf Outing starting at 9 a.m. at Beeches Golf Club. Registration required.

26 – Football: Boys varsity against Parchment High School at 7 p.m.

26 – Bumbleberry Acres: Date Night on the Farm from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Adults only. $20 for individuals, $30 for couples.

26 – South Haven Memorial Library: South Haven Writers read-around from 1 to 4 p.m. New writers welcome.

27 – YDC South Haven: Oktoberfest Pancake Breakfast fundraiser from 8 to 11 a.m. $10 per person.

27 – South Haven Memorial Library: Astronomy Club at 11 a.m. Registration is recommended.

27 – Bangor Community Fundraiser: Fundraising event for the Shelter Family in Lions Park from 2 to 7 p.m. Event includes food trucks, petting zoo and live performances.

27-28 – Hartford Fall Festival: From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday at the Hartford Public Library.

28 – Gingerman Raceway: Track Night from 1:30 to 8:30 p.m.

29 – Soccer: Boys middle school against Black River Public School at North Shore Elementary School.

29 – Soccer: Boys junior varsity against Black River Public School at 5 p.m. at Ratcliffe Field.

29 – Soccer: Boys varsity against Black River Public School at 6:30 p.m. at Ratcliffe Field.

October

1 – Soccer: Boys middle school against Watervliet at 5 p.m. at North Shore Elementary School.

1 – Soccer: Boys junior varsity against Rockford at 5 p.m. at Ratcliffe Field.

1 – Soccer: Boys varsity against Rockford at 6:30 p.m. at Ratcliffe Field.

1 – Volleyball: Middle school girls against Fennville at 5:30 p.m.

1 – South Haven Memorial Library: Hooked on Yarn from 1 to 3:30 p.m.

2 – Golf: Girls varsity at 9 a.m. at Hawkshead Links.

2 – Tennis: Boys varsity against Three Rivers at 4 p.m.

2 – Volleyball: Girls junior varsity against Lawton at 5:30 p.m.

2 – Volleyball: Girls freshman against Black River at 5:50 p.m.

2 – Volleyball: Girls varsity against Lawton at 6:30 p.m.

2 – Football: Boys junior varsity against Watervliet at 6 p.m. at Ratcliffe Field.

3 – South Haven Memorial Library: Play-doh play date at 11 a.m. Free event for preschoolers, siblings are welcome.

4 – Bumbleberry Acres: Princess, Superhero and Unicorn Day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

4 – DeGrandchamp Farms: Cranberry Harvest Days from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Take a trolley ride out to the bogs, view the packing facility, food tastings games and more.

6 – Soccer: Boys middle school against Fennville at 5 p.m.

6 – Volleyball: Girls middle school against coloma at 5:30 p.m.

6 – Covert Branch Library: After school art workshop for grades 6 to 12 from 3 to 5 p.m.

7 – Volleyball: Girls junior varsity against Fennville at 5:30 p.m.

7 – Volleyball: Girls freshman against Fennville at 5:30 p.m.

7 – Volleyball: Girls varsity against Fennville at 6:30 p.m.

9 – Volleyball: Girls varsity against Berrien Springs at 1 p.m.

9- Volleyball: Girls junior varsity against Berrien Springs at 2 p.m.

9 – Football: Boys junior varsity against Kalamazoo Christian at 6 p.m. at Ratcliffe Field.

9 – South Haven Young Professionals: monthly networking event from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. a Gravity Winery.

10 – Bumbleberry Acres: Date Night on the Farm from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Adults only. $20 for individuals, $30 for couples.

10 – South Haven Memorial Library: Bevin Cohen will host teas, tinctures and oils craft event at 4 p.m. Learn how to make salves, balms and tinctures using local herbs.

11 – Bangor Community Fire Department: Touch a Truck from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

11 – DeGrandchamp Farms: Cranberry Harvest Days from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Take a trolley ride out to the bogs, view the packing facility, food tastings games and more.

13 – South Haven Memorial Library: Author event with Michigan author Mark Love at 6 p.m. Includes a discussion on his books, writing process, characters and a book signing.

13 – South Haven Garden Club: Making herbal smudges at First Congregational Church.

14 – South Haven Memorial Library: South haven Strummers from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Bring your own ukulele.

14 – Swimming: Girls varsity against Plainwell at 6 p.m.

15 – South Haven Memorial Library: Hooked on Yarn from 1 to 3:30 p.m.

16 – Volleyball: Girls middle school against Bridgeman at 5:30 p.m.

17 – Football: Boys varsity against Allegan at 7 p.m. at Ratcliffe Field.

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South Haven Tribune

Photos by Jose F. Moreno / The Philadelphia Inquirer / TNS

Stephanie Vincent, an activist with Montgomery County Community Watch, is seen in the rearview mirror of her car on Sept. 3 in Norristown, Pennsylvania – in the same vehicle she and her team often use to patrol the streets. As part of Montgomery County's growing rapid-response team, she helps track ICE activity, document enforcement actions, mobilize protesters, and encourage resistance to enforcement in the community.

Chasing ICE

‘Rapid-response’ activists follow agents, then stand up for immigrants

By JEFF GAMMAGE
The Philadelphia Inquirer (TNS)

PHILADELPHIA — When ICE agents headed out to raid the Super Gigante food market in West Norriton this summer, they didn't travel alone.

Following behind them were cars carrying members of the Montgomery County Watch rapid-response team, immigration activists who work to find and follow the Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Their goal: to record agents' activities, to alert people to protest at the scenes of arrests, and, at times, to loudly confront the officers.

The group had discovered ICE agents and cars gathering that July morning in the parking lot outside the Plymouth Meeting Regal Cinema movie theater.

From there it was 4½ miles to the supermarket. The two groups arrived nearly simultaneously.

As ICE arrested 14 people for immigration offenses, activists yelled at and questioned the masked agents, asking if they told their children that they worked separating families.

“Show your face! Show your face!” they demanded.

“Get back!” an ICE agent shouted as a woman in sandals and a T-shirt approached him.

“Cowards!” came the rejoinder.

The agents did not respond to the taunt.

“They're trying to do this quietly, they're trying to do this when nobody is watching” ⊠ and the rapid-response team aims to ensure that doesn't happen, said Stephanie Vincent, an organizer who was among those who went to the supermarket that morning. “The citizens are front line right now.”

The volunteer teams are part of a growing on-the-ground resistance to the increase in ICE activity across the region.

Advocates travel Philadelphia-area highways and interstates, looking for ICE, and particularly checking big parking lots where agents might be setting up for an operation.

Activists also have established a series of county-level hotlines, enabling people to report ICE sightings. Lines are set up for Philadelphia, Montgomery, and Delaware Counties, Centre County, Lehigh and Northampton Counties, and in the combined area of York, Lancaster, Adams, Dauphin, and Franklin Counties.

The response in Montgomery County, where the county seat of Norristown has been an Immigration and Customs Enforcement target, has been perhaps the most visible. At least 62 immigrants have been arrested countywide since the end of May, advocates say.

Stephanie Vincent and Andi Laudisio, left, activists with Montgomery County Watch, are photographed on Sept. 3 in Norristown, Pennsylvania.

“People are showing up and protesting, to show we support [migrants] and don't want them taken out of the community, and asking ICE to think about what they're doing,” said Rachel Rutter, executive director of Project Libertad, a Phoenixville-based organization that assists immigrant families. “It's a direct response to the increase in enforcement.”

ICE officials said the agency respects people's constitutional right to peacefully express their opinions.

“That being said, ICE remains committed to performing its immigration-enforcement mission consistent with federal law and agency policy,” a spokesperson in Philadelphia said. “These ‘rapid response teams' will not deter ICE from completing its mission. Any interference with federal law enforcement officers in the commission of their official duties is a federal crime.”

Rapid response is not confined to the Philadelphia area. Immigrant advocates in states including California and Colorado work to spot ICE undercover cars, often SUVs with tinted windows, and some places have also established hotlines.

The First Amendment generally protects the right to watch and record police activities in public, but “approaching anyone during an enforcement action is inherently risky,” said Morgan Bailey, a former senior official at the Department of Homeland Security.

Activists may not know the full context of an operation, including those that might involve a dangerous suspect or a weapon. And ICE officers might perceive the unexpected appearance of a third party as a threat, she said.

“Even well-meaning interventions can lead to escalation,” said Bailey, now a partner at the international law firm Mayer Brown. “Unintended consequences can affect the activists, officers, bystanders, and the very individuals the activists seek to help.”

In August, Department of Homeland Security officials announced the arrest of a driver who they said tried to run over a Border Patrol agent in Maine. That, DHS said, followed incidents in which a threatening letter containing a white powdery substance was sent to an ICE office in New York City; a man who authorities say sought to stab an ICE officer was arrested in San Francisco; and a bomb threat was made against an ICE facility in Dallas.

In a statement, Homeland Security blamed “months of smears and rhetoric by activists, politicians, and the media comparing ICE law enforcement to the Nazi Gestapo, kidnappers, and the Secret Police. This shameful rhetoric has fueled a culture of hate against law enforcement.”

All this comes as President Donald Trump presses his effort to arrest and deport millions of immigrants, enforcement that is being felt across the Philadelphia region.

The number of people arrested by ICE in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware surged after Stephen Miller, White House deputy chief of staff, said on Fox News in late May that the agency would set a quota of 3,000 arrests a day. Arrests doubled from an average of 26 a day from January through May 21 to an average of 51 a day between May 22 and June 26, recent government data show.

The number of immigrants held in ICE detention in Pennsylvania and New Jersey was up about 68 percent in July compared with the start of the Trump administration in January.

Even before the raid at Super Gigante, some Montgomery County commissioners aired concerned about the prospect of residents confronting ICE during arrests.

“Please, do not put yourself or anyone at risk,” Chair Neil Makhija pleaded at a board meeting in June, soon after the first wave of ICE arrests commenced in Norristown. “Do not engage in a physical confrontation or anything close to that. … We don't want to see something tragic happen.”

Rapid-response activists say they never attempt to physically disrupt ICE. Instead, they try to record on their phones as arrests unfold, and take notes according to a protocol known as SALUTE: The Size of the ICE force, its Activity, specific Location, Unit markings and license plates, the Time, and the Equipment being used.

“When people are being snatched off of the streets, out of their jobs and their homes, there's a sense we need to protect each other,” said Natalia Naranjo, a rapid-response activist who works mostly on hotlines and translations.

On that summer day in Norristown, two team members actually arrived at the supermarket slightly ahead of ICE, said Andi Laudisio, a team member.

“We found them in the morning, and followed them there,” she said. “We had been checking parking lots.”

She had trailed ICE in the past, she said, though the market raid was the first time she witnessed an arrest.

“We are just legal observers,” Laudisio said. “Some are only taking video and pictures, others start being loud.”

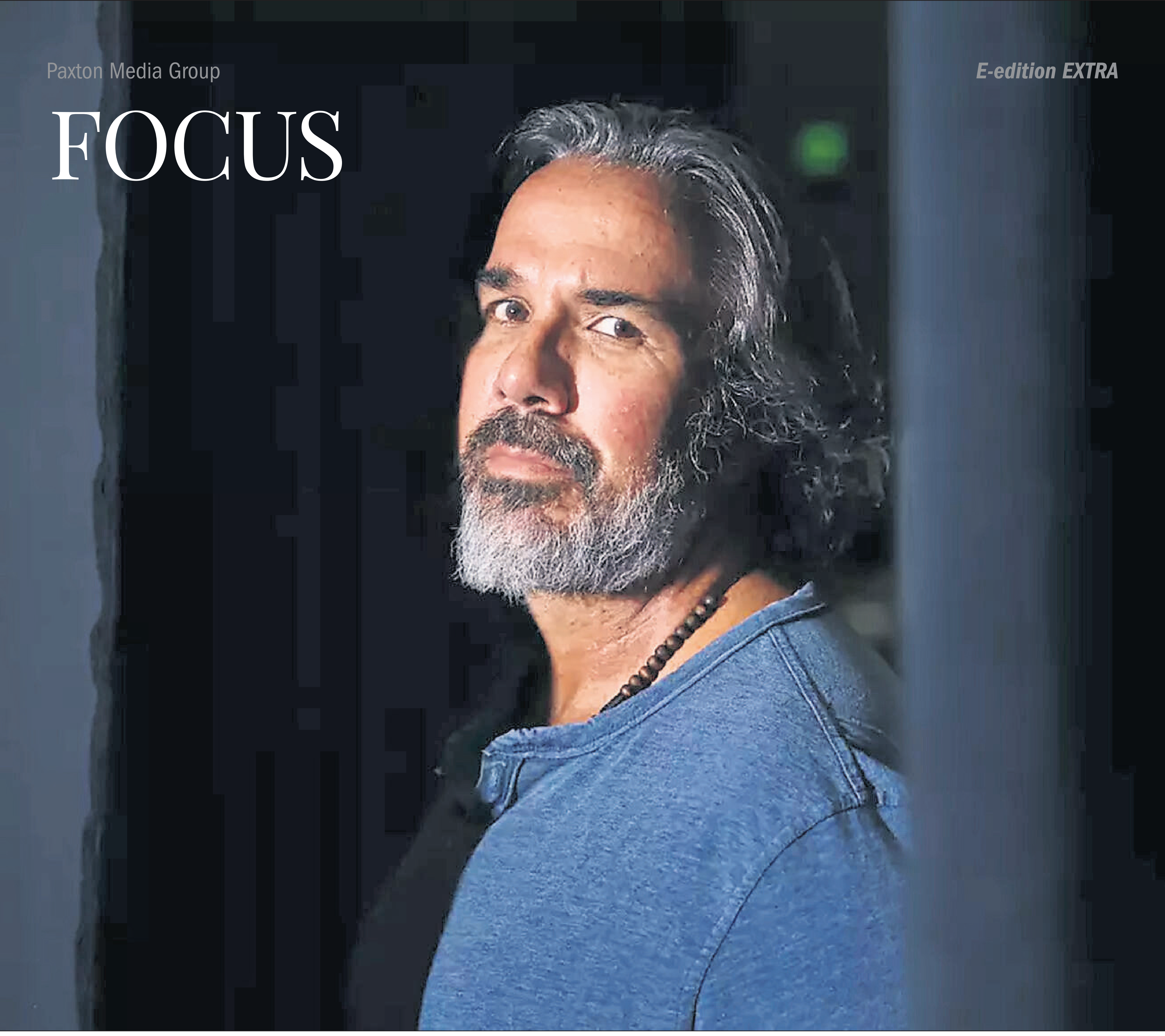
Is the strategy effective?

“I think so,” she said. “I think the community feels a little bit safer knowing we're out there. … We are getting people who are like, ‘I'll do rapid-response work,' who were at first like, ‘I don't want to be out on the streets.'”

Project Libertad has been increasing its effort to assist family members, the children and spouses traumatized by the sudden arrest and loss of a loved one who may be the main provider. The project has offered direct financial support as well as information on how to find an attorney and navigate the legal system.

Organizer Vincent said rapid response is growing at a key time, with ICE emboldened and local leaders often responding to that challenge through traditional political channels.

“We're at this precipice,” she said. “The ICE force is only going to grow. The activity, and who they target, and what they do, is only going to get worse.”



Christina House / Los Angeles Times / TNS

Manuel Oliver lost his son, Joaquin "Guac" Oliver, in the Parkland shooting. He's now bringing his gun-reform activism to the stage in a one-man show called "Guac."

His son died in the Parkland shooting

He's fighting for gun reform onstage and with a controversial AI clone

By JESSICA GELT
Los Angeles Times (TNS)

LOS ANGELES — Two days before a shooter armed with an AR-15-style rifle killed an 8-year-old and a 10-year-old, and injured 21 others in a mass shooting at the Church of the Annunciation in Minneapolis, Manuel and Patricia Oliver embarked on a six-day drive from Florida to Los Angeles to take meetings in advance of the West Coast premiere of Manuel's one-man show, "Guac."

The show, which was co-written by Manuel and James Clements and directed by Michael Cotey, is about Manuel's son, Joaquin "Guac" Oliver, who was killed on Valentine's Day 2018 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., after being shot four times by a 19-year-old armed with an AR-15. Since then, there have been at least 400 more school shootings in America.

After the Minnesota tragedy – the 44th school shooting this year – Manuel did an interview with CNN while he was on the road, telling the anchors, "I believe that thoughts and prayers, this time, are out of the picture. These kids were actually praying ... and still they were shot. So I know exactly what those parents are going through. It's a terrible situation and it hasn't stopped. That's the worst part."

Manuel, a painter by trade, first conceived of "Guac" early in the COVID-19 pandemic, and has since performed it around the country, including at New York's Public Theater and Woolly Mammoth in Washington, D.C. The upcoming show will be presented by Center Theatre Group at Culver City's Kirk Douglas Theatre beginning Oct. 14.

The Olivers believe that creative forms of activism can be most effective, and "Guac" has become a cornerstone of their work. The show is not meant to be political, nor is it meant to be sad, Manuel says. But it is designed to make audiences want to step up and do something about the gun violence epidemic in America, which claims more children's lives each year than any other cause.

During the 100 minutes that Manuel spends onstage, he paints a vivid picture of his son's life and reenacts how he died, using hammer strikes to symbolize each bullet that struck his son. The show, however, is not about Joaquin's death, but rather about the vibrant way he lived his life, Manuel says.

The idea arose when the Olivers grew tired of doling out tiny soundbites for mainstream news. They wanted a captive audience for long enough to lay out their case for change. From the moment their son died, the Olivers have refused to give up on their fight for sensible gun reform in America – no matter who is in power.

To that end, Manuel has a message for the president.

"If Donald Trump decides to sign an executive order banning assault weapons and passing a universal background check and safe storage for every single gun, he might get the Nobel Peace Prize," Oliver says. "Then you can say that you are the first and only president in the history of this country that was able to fight back and end gun violence."

Does Manuel think that Trump will do that? Not really but, as he often says, he's out of options. Plus, he believes that Trump does whatever he wants with very little pushback from his party, the public or the courts.

"We want to continue to be parents because that's a right that we have," Manuel says, sitting beside his wife in a rehearsal room at the Culver City theater. "We carry Joaquin, and we will do anything to make sure that this injustice will not hit more families." They're also parents to older daughter, Andrea, and grandparents to 1-month-old Mia.

Joaquin was an old soul, Patricia says with a warm smile – her eyes sad but glowing. He was kind and curious. As a little kid, he'd ask his parents to read everything to him, including the backs of cereal boxes and the sides of Happy Meals. He wanted to know and absorb as much as possible. He loved sports, and by the time he was a 6-foot-2 high school student, he was devoted to basketball. He enjoyed going to museums and listening to music. Guns N' Roses was one of his favorite bands.

He was also obsessed with politics and started a podcast in his garage with friends to talk about the issues of the day, including Joaquin's antipathy for the first Trump administration's treatment of migrants.

Joaquin was passionate about gun control, his parents say. In 2012, after 20 first-graders and six adults were shot and killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., an 11-year-old Joaquin wrote a letter to gun owners advocating for universal background checks as part of a school project.

Each time a child is killed by a gun in America, another parent joins the Olivers in the ever-growing network of grieving families wondering how they will go on in the wake of such profound horror and pain, Manuel says.

"It's the worst network; you never wanna be part of that network," he says.

But the Olivers continue to make those connections. Over the last three years the couple has been traveling the country in a bright orange school bus emblazoned with the slogans "Save Lives," "Enough Is Enough" and "Stop Gun Violence."

"We are the reminders," Manuel says. "We understand what's going on in those families perfectly. I know what happened that day in that house, how the father felt. Patricia knows exactly the pain, the suffering, the anxiety behind not knowing if your kid is alive or not. But that happens every single day in our country."

The seemingly unstoppable drumbeat of preventable child gun deaths drives the Olivers. In 2018, they founded Change the Ref, an advocacy group that works to empower kids to enact change through education, conversation and urban art. The group's website champions "nonviolent creative confrontation to expose the disastrous effects of the mass shooting pandemic." Young people – those who have grown up with the trauma of active-shooter drills – are the ones most likely to pass meaningful reform when they come of age, the Olivers say.

After the disillusionment of meeting with and lobbying politicians for gun reform, they got creative with their messaging.

"They will ask the same questions and they will show you that support, that interest," says Patricia, adding the legislators take notes, tell you that they are "sorry for your loss" and ask what they can do. They often hand you a business card, urging you to call them at any time. "And that's it," she says.

The Olivers now offer "thoughts and prayers" toilet paper featuring the many platitudes employed by politicians after mass shootings. The idea is for people to mail the rolls to their representatives. Patricia also created a children's book, titled "Joaquin's First School Shooting," which illustrates in childish drawings – and no uncertain terms – what exactly happened to her son and the other kids on that awful day. This too can be sent to a local office.

"When these things happen, it demands that we do more," Manuel says. "If you don't talk about the guns, then you're not solving the problem. You're just letting it go. Every time you send thoughts and prayers, you're just saying it already passed. Let's move on. So again, we don't have that option. We refuse to have that option."

Most recently, the Olivers used AI to make their case. In early August, the couple unveiled an AI video clone of Joaquin, which engaged in an interview with former CNN host Jim Acosta on what would have been Joaquin's 25th birthday. The backlash against the segment was fierce and immediate, with critics calling Acosta "ghoulish" and "manipulative."

The Olivers are fierce in their defense of their use of AI to re-create Joaquin. Everything the bot says was gleaned from Joaquin's writing and social media posts, they say. And it is in keeping with their principles of activism, which are creative, tech-savvy, a touch punk rock and deeply nontraditional. Joaquin, according to his parents, was a socially conscious rebel in life.

"We just opened the AI door and everybody went crazy," Manuel says, adding that people judged their choice harshly, saying that AI should not be used to re-create the dead.

"I disagree," Manuel says. "Let me give you an emotional reason. I lost my son. I want to hear him again. So f------, I want to do that. None of your business."

Manuel also does not believe that Joaquin's AI avatar should be kept out of the public discourse about gun control. The bot, he says, is a good tool for communicating Joaquin's message – and everything it's saying was derived from Joaquin, not created by them.

"When someone is offended by that, by the use of technology, you're missing the point," says Manuel. "Because you should be offended by the reason that brought us to do this. What we're doing here is not offensive. ... You should see what happened eight years ago when my kid was shot four times. Thank God you were not there because that will destroy you."

FOCUS

Jeff Wheeler / The Minnesota Star Tribune / TNS

Residents of the tiny home village and community members from Mosaic Christian Community visit while working on a craft project together in St. Paul last month.

These churches are sharing land with homeless people

They say it's the Christian thing to do

By SUSAN DU
The Minnesota Star Tribune (TNS)

MINNEAPOLIS — A Nazarene ministry in St. Paul's working-class East Side. An aging Lutheran congregation in Roseville. A nondenominational megachurch in Maple Grove.

Three vastly different churches are on the leading edge of a Minnesota experiment in treating chronic homelessness by building tiny home villages – known as Sacred Settlements – on their land for society's hardest-to-house people.

The settlements are modest, each comprising a handful of tiny houses clustered near trees and water. Neat, wood-chipped trails ramble from one home to the next. Hand-carved road signs and communal vegetable patches add a cottage flair. Each house is uniquely built and donated by other churches across the state, with rents based on size.

Part religious movement and part housing policy research, Sacred Settlements' first few years have suggested that homeless people once written off as unwilling to receive help can find stability in the right environment. At the same time, the churches that welcomed them have seen renewed relevancy and interest, their leaders say, in an era when political divisions are driving younger generations away from religious life.

"It wasn't a driving factor in our decision to have the settlement, but the result was we have more folks coming in, a lot of folks curious, younger people coming to work with us," said Michael Stetzler, former board president of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Roseville. "The energy that it's created internally, and the draw that it is for some people looking at us from the outside, is kind of a revitalization."

A religious response to opposition

Federal law exempts religious property owners from zoning codes that would typically hinder secular builders, as long as they use their land to further their mission. Settled, the nonprofit behind Sacred Settlements, argues that serving the poor is aligned with all major world religions. By leveraging their privilege under the law, these churches are acting out a form of radical hospitality they say is at the root of Christianity.

"Collectively, religiosity owns a lot of land, and they don't pay taxes," said Seanne Thomas, a St. Paul resident who saw the state's first Sacred Settlement established at Mosaic Christian Community, next door to her, in 2022. Thomas isn't religious but said she respected the church's trailblazing move and has had no problems with the tiny home village.

"What better use of all of their real estate than to embrace and shelter those that are experiencing chronic homelessness?" she asked.

Not everyone trusts the concept to work out. In the outer-ring suburb of Maple Grove, members of homeowner associations opposed the development of a Sacred Settlement with 12 homes at Church of the Open Door. They petitioned to make it a sober community restricted to those who already had jobs, and lobbied for a state law change to place churches' tiny home villages under the regulatory purview of cities.

The bill didn't pass. Church leaders are now cautiously moving ahead with plans to open their settlement within the next two years. They don't need to overcome a public hearing and City Council vote to obtain city permits – a common barrier for other homeless service providers – but they are continuing to talk with skeptical neighbors.

Over time, the opposition's website quietly changed from "No Settlement Maple Grove" to the more neutral " Settlement Maple Grove." The group did not respond to emails requesting comment for this story.

"Serving the poor is from cover to cover in the Bible," said Pastor Dave Brickey at Church of the Open Door. "To me, the opportunity to support this landed on a plate in front of us, and we had a choice of whether we were going to be obedient or not."

The missing piece of 'Housing First'

One sunny afternoon in St. Paul's Payne-Phalen neighborhood, Jr McNeely sat at a shaded picnic table with children from Mosaic Christian Community, punching name tags out of leather for them to decorate.

McNeely had been on the streets for 10 years before he came to Mosaic's Sacred Settlement with his girlfriend and dog. No emergency shelter would have kept them together, so they lived in tents across the city. At Mosaic, they have four walls, a key and the peace of mind to sleep without needing to keep one eye open for those who might hurt them.

"I totally changed my whole perspective," McNeely said about moving into a Sacred Settlement and getting to know church members. "I thought they were just judging me and stuff, listening to the negative voices. Now that I've opened up more and let them get closer, I know they're here to help me."

Rian Kloetzke, a fellow resident, said it's been a strange thing to have people be nice to him without wanting anything back.

"Everyone's always smiling, chipper. It's weird," Kloetzke joked. "It gives me faith again, in humanity."

Underpinning the Sacred Settlements model is an evolving body of research built on some longstanding principles about addressing chronic homelessness, as well as some novel ideas.

"We believe, after spending hundreds of days on the streets ... learning people's stories, that underneath all of this is a common story of a profound and catastrophic loss of family," said Gabrielle Clowdus, who founded Settled.

"That's what makes the difference between someone who's able to transition out of homelessness, and someone who gets stuck there and becomes chronically homeless."

Clowdus' doctoral research focused on ways to solve homelessness that go beyond the well-established Housing First approach, which says people need a place to live before they can focus on holding down a job and treating a drug addiction.

While federal housing policy operates on Housing First principles, critics say the approach hasn't been successful because it doesn't confront the root causes of homelessness – including addiction, psychological trauma and physical disability – nor the isolation that people acclimated to the streets can feel in apartments.

Many researchers have looked more deeply into the role social connections have in disrupting mental illness, addiction and homelessness. Sacred Settlements' "Full Community Model" calls for the permanent presence of "intentional neighbors" – people who have never experienced chronic homelessness, voluntarily living alongside formerly homeless residents and sharing the work of maintaining the village.

When problems emerge, congregations have found ways to be flexible, Clowdus said. When one resident became convinced there was a demon on a doorstep, church leaders – who had no experience with the more charismatic tradition of expelling evil spirits – told it to go away in the name of Jesus. (It soothed the afflicted resident.)

After moving in to a Sacred Settlement, people have re-established medical care, gotten control over the hording in their storage units and started healing the wounds of family abandonment and social rejection in therapy. Everybody comes in for family dinner once a week.

"It's not short-term housing, it's not a stop to someplace better, it's not you have 90 days to get better," said Meredith Campbell, whose family oversees the Mosaic Sacred Settlement. "It's a commitment to the permanent, which means that our lives are changed too. When we say there's room in in our lives, there's room in our calendars, at our table, at our house. That sort of reciprocal relationship is necessary for transformation, and we've seen it."

HEALTH

MAYO CLINIC Q&A

What do you know about colon cancer?

By MAYO CLINIC NEWS NETWORK (TNS)

DEAR MAYO CLINIC: I received a notice from my health system that I'm due for a colorectal cancer screening. I'm 45. Do I really need to have this done now?

ANSWER: It's easy to be confused or overwhelmed by screening recommendations for common types of cancer. Your health care team is a trusted resource for keeping you up to date on screenings, including screening for colorectal cancer.

Why, when and how should you be screened for this cancer? Test your knowledge of colon cancer screening with these myths and facts.

Colorectal cancer is rare.

MYTH: Colorectal cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer-related death in men and women combined. Roughly 1 in 26 women will have colorectal cancer, and about 1 in 24 men will have colorectal cancer. To put that in perspective, when watching a football game, of all the players on the field, about one player would be diagnosed with colorectal cancer in their lifetime.

Colorectal cancer can happen when you're young.

FACT: The rate of colorectal cancer is increasing in people under 50. Rates of colorectal cancer in people under 50 have doubled since 1990. In people over 65, the diagnosis rates have been decreasing, most likely because of colorectal cancer screening.

Many younger adults don't consider themselves at risk. That's why it's especially important to know the warning signs of colorectal cancer and not put off getting medical attention. Early diagnosis is essential to surviving colorectal cancer. If this cancer is found when it's only in the colon or rectum, the five-year survival rate is over 90 percent. That survival rate drops to roughly 15 percent if the cancer spreads beyond the colon and rectum.

Screening for colorectal cancer starts at age 45.

FACT: In 2021, the recommendation for colorectal cancer was updated to begin screening at age 45. This is because the rate of diagnosis is increasing at younger ages.

Colorectal cancer can be prevented with screening.

FACT: The goal of colorectal cancer screening is to prevent cancer, not just find it when it has already developed. Most colorectal cancer develops from a polyp, a small, precancerous growth. The presence of polyps can easily be identified using colonoscopy screening tests. Polyps can be removed during a colonoscopy to prevent them from developing into cancer.

You can also help keep your colon healthy by:

- Add bulk to your diet with lots of veggies and whole grains.
- Eat healthy fats found in olive oil, salmon, avocados and nuts.
- Strive for 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week.
- Watch your weight. Carrying extra pounds has been shown to increase your risk for colon cancer.
- Drink alcohol in moderation, and don't smoke.

Family history is the only risk factor for colorectal cancer.

MYTH: While a family history of colorectal cancer influences your risk of developing cancer, other important risk factors increase the risk of developing colorectal cancer. Medical conditions including obesity and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), and lifestyle choices, such as a diet high in red meats, smoking and alcohol use, increase risk. Because colorectal cancer is common, all adults over 45 should be screened regardless of family history.

African Americans have a higher risk of developing colorectal cancer, and American Indian/Alaska Native people have the highest risk of colorectal cancer.

A positive stool-based screening for colorectal cancer is the same as a cancer diagnosis.

MYTH: A stool-based test looks for more than cancer, and it can identify precancerous lesions or polyps. These tests don't address the polyp if a polyp is present in the colon. A follow-up colonoscopy is needed to identify the polyp and potentially remove it.

If you have more questions, talk with your health care team about screening options for colorectal cancer at age 45.

HEALTH CARE HELPLINE

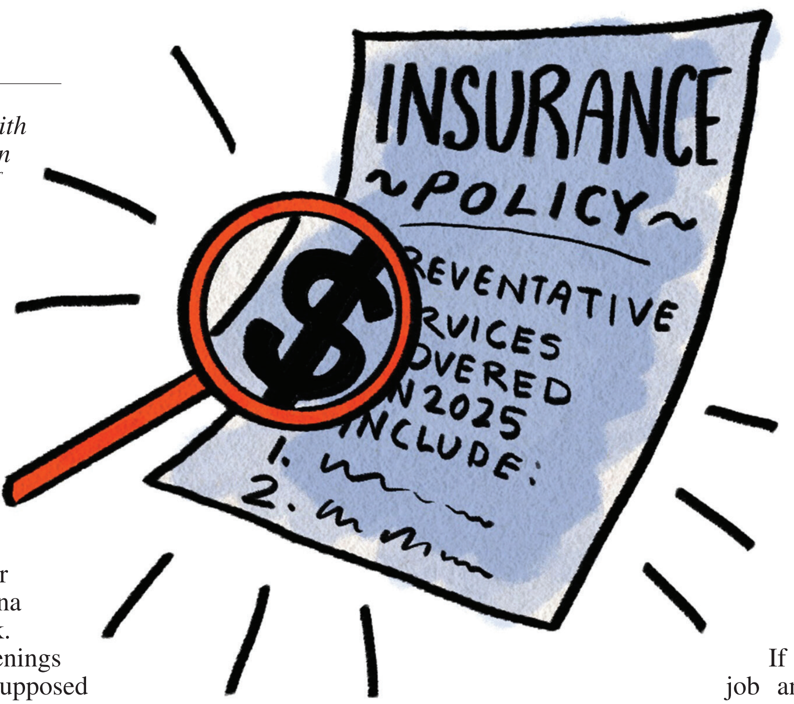
Consumers can do a quick online search to see whether other large insurance companies in their area cover the health care service they need.

Try this when your doctor says 'yes' to a preventive test but insurance says 'no'

By JACKIE FORTIÉR and OONA ZENDA
KFF Health News (TNS)

"My son was diagnosed with congenital CMV, a virus that can cause hearing loss. As part of this diagnosis, he will be required to have routine hearing tests every few months until he is 10 years old. I reached out to you because I wanted to know why my son's hearing tests weren't covered by our insurance and why we needed to pay for it."

— Anna Deutscher, 29, from Minnesota, writing about her infant son, Beckham



Trying to figure out why her claim was denied took Anna Deutscher a lot of time and work.

Baby Beckham's hearing screenings were preventive care, which is supposed to be covered by law. Every hearing test cost them about $350 out-of-pocket. Between those bills and Beckham's other health costs, the family maxed out two credit cards.

"Everything just immediately goes right to trying to pay that debt off," Deutscher said.

At times, she felt overwhelmed by her son's medical needs, on top of working. Deutscher said she "didn't know what else to do" when her insurance company kept saying no to her requests that it pay for the hearing tests.

No one wants to spend time fighting their health insurance company. Many people feel they don't have the knowledge or stamina to do it. But if, like Deutscher, you're denied for a preventive service, it may be worth it.

Here are a few tips – a slingshot and a few stones, so you can be David when facing a health care Goliath.

1. Check your policy

Read your plan documents to confirm whether the treatment or service is covered. Pay attention to any exclusions or limitations. Deutscher's plan documents say hearing tests are not covered. But even when a sought-after benefit is excluded, that might not be the end of the line.

2. Is the service preventive?

Many types of preventive care are supposed to be covered without additional cost under the Affordable Care Act. If you receive a recommended preventive screening and have private insurance, including through the Affordable Care Act marketplace, there should be no copayment at the time of service, and you shouldn't get a bill later. A small number of insurance plans are "grandfathered in," which means you may not have the same rights and protections as the ACA provides. Check with your employer's human resources benefits manager to find out for sure.

A physician recommended regular hearing screenings for the Deutschers' baby, which the healthcare.gov list indicates should be considered preventive and covered by insurance. But JoAnn Volk, an insurance expert and a research professor at Georgetown University, said real life often doesn't match what the law requires.

"It really does come down to everyone sort of being on their best behavior on the provider and plan side to truly interpret and follow what should be covered," Volk said.

3. Peel apart the denial

If you've been denied coverage, you need to know why. Health insurance companies are required to explain every denial. The denial letter or your explanation of benefits should state the reason, which may be a coverage exclusion, incorrect coding, or a determination that the service was deemed not medically necessary. Follow up and ask for specific details about the denial and the criteria used, and request an explanation of benefits. Then use that information to build an appeal, being sure to address the reason for the denial.

4. File the appeal

There are a few steps to know, but you don't have to be a lawyer to figure them out. Usually there's an appeal form to fill out. Visit your insurer's website, check your explanation of benefits, or call your insurer and ask how to get started. The process typically includes writing a letter saying why you disagree with the denial. Include any medical records or test results that support your case and a copy of the federal guidelines that show the care is a covered, preventive service. If you can, ask your physician to write a letter explaining why the service is preventive and necessary.

Your insurance company has 30 to 60 days to respond, depending on your state and health plan. If your appeal is denied, try again. Some people win on the second go-round.

If your appeal is denied a second time, you can request an external medical review. That process is led by a medical professional who is supposed to make an unbiased decision. In California, for instance, many health plans fall under the jurisdiction of the Department of Managed Health Care.

"In 2023, 72 percent of health plan members that came to us and filed an independent medical review ended up getting the service that they requested," said Mary Watanabe, who leads the department.

Keep deadlines in mind. How much time you have to file should be on your explanation of benefits. Your insurer is required by law to accept the external reviewer's decision.

For more help starting an appeal or asking for an external review, visit healthcare.gov or your state insurance department.

5. Ask human resources for help

If you get coverage through your job and you're hitting roadblocks, consider emailing your human resources department. HR folks have contacts with the insurance companies you don't and may save you a few calls to the 800 number on the back of your insurance card. Legally, HR is under no obligation to help, and covering a health service may not be in your employer's financial interest. But sending HR the documents you prepared for the insurance appeal may prompt them to push the insurance company to take another look.

"The whole point of employers offering benefits is to attract and retain a solid workforce, right?" Volk said.

Making a case to HR may be a ramp toward getting the treatment or service covered the next time your company revises its health plan offerings, said Rhonda Buckholtz, a consultant who advises businesses on medical billing.

She said consumers can do a quick online search to see whether other large insurance companies in their area cover the health care service they need. That information can give you leverage, Buckholtz said.

Going to HR helped Deutscher. Eventually, her employer said it would cover the cost of hearing tests for baby Beckham for the current plan year. Deutscher's employer has a self-funded plan, which gives companies the ability to customize benefits. It ultimately decided to add hearing tests as a standard benefit for all employees.

"It's been like this constant cloud hanging over my head, so for that to suddenly be lifted, it didn't feel real. I also have never gone to my HR for something like this before. I didn't even know this was an option," Deutscher said.

Health Care Helpline helps you navigate the health system hurdles between you and good care. Send us your tricky question and we may tap a policy sleuth to puzzle it out. The crowdsourced project is a joint production of NPR and KFF Health News. KFF Health News is a national newsroom that produces in-depth journalism about health issues and is one of the core operating programs of KFF – the independent source for health policy research, polling and journalism.

MAYO CLINIC Q&A

Reconnect with exercise during cancer treatment

By MAYO CLINIC NEWS NETWORK (TNS)

Dreamstime / TNS

DEAR MAYO CLINIC: I've always been active, but after being diagnosed with breast cancer and starting my treatment, I'm a little worried about getting back into my routine. Is it OK to exercise during cancer treatment?

ANSWER: Exercise decreases the risk of developing cancer. Studies have shown there is a 30%- 35 percent reduction in the risk of breast cancer among the most physically active women compared with those who are least active. Exercise also plays a protective role in many other cancers, including lung, endometrial, colon, kidney, bladder and esophageal.

However, exercise can also be helpful during and after cancer treatment. According to the American Cancer Society, research shows that exercise during cancer treatment can improve physical functioning and quality of life.

Moderate exercise can:

- Increase strength and endurance.
- Strengthen the cardiovascular system.
- Reduce depression.
- Decrease anxiety.
- Diminish fatigue.
- Improve mood.
- Raise self-esteem.
- Lessen pain.
- Improve sleep.

Of course, there may be certain issues that prevent or affect a person's ability to exercise due to disease or type of treatment, including:

- Anemia – having a low number of red blood cells or quantity of hemoglobin or protein.
- Weak immune system.
- Some forms of radiation treatment.
- Some surgeries limit certain exercises.

Some people should use extra care to reduce the risk of injury, including older people and those with bone disease, arthritis, or nerve damage, also called peripheral neuropathy.

Exciting studies show that regular physical activity is linked to increased life expectancy after a cancer diagnosis. In many cases, it also decreases the risk of cancer recurrence. Multiple studies in cancer survivors, with the strongest evidence in breast and colon cancer survivors, have suggested that physically active cancer survivors have a lower risk of cancer recurrence and improved survival compared with those who are inactive.

The American Cancer Society, the American Institute for Cancer Research, the American College of Sports Medicine, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services all advocate physical activity for cancer patients and survivors.

The American Cancer Society recommends cancer survivors take these actions:

- Participate in regular physical activity.
- Avoid inactivity and return to normal daily activities as soon as possible after diagnosis.
- Exercise at least 150 minutes per week.
- Include strength training exercises at least two days per week.

Not everyone is ready to head to the gym during or after cancer therapy. However, reconnecting with an activity you like to do can increase your enjoyment and ability to stick with an exercise program. Exercise may include a bike ride with friends or chasing your dog around the park.

Walking is a great activity for almost everyone, and swimming can be a wonderful alternative for those with joint issues. Yoga is fantastic for strengthening, flexibility and balance concerns.

– Kaye Sturz, D.N.P., Hematology/Oncology, Mayo Clinic Health System, Eau Claire, Wisconsin

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ASK THE PEDIATRICIAN

Jonathan Ross / Dreamstime / TNS

Immunizations are one of the most important steps we can take to protect kids in the classroom.

How annual checkups support your child's health

By RACHEL DAWKINS, MD, FAAP
American Academy of Pediatrics (TNS)

No matter what grade your child is entering this fall, there's probably a lot to do as school starts. Here's why a thorough health checkup and sports physical should be on your back-to-school checklist.

Seeing the doctor at least once a year helps create an accurate, up-to-date record of your child's growth and development. For some healthy kids, back-to-school could be the only time they visit the pediatrician. That makes this annual checkup even more essential.

Physicals help your child's doctor spot new health issues such as a recent injury, food allergy or difficulties with sleep. Regular screenings to check your child's vision, hearing, oral health, development and more can identify health problems ranging from minor to life-threatening. It's also a great opportunity to get advice from your pediatrician on how to promote healthy behaviors and prevent potential problems.

At the back-to-school checkup, your pediatrician can also ask about mental or emotional issues that, if left untreated, could make life and school much harder for your child. They can offer guidance on building healthy habits and routines, including nutrition, physical activity, sleep and a family media plan, so that your child can be healthy and ready to learn and thrive in school.

All 50 states require children and teens to get certain vaccines before starting school. These regulations help keep serious diseases such as whooping cough, polio, measles and others from harming your child and sickening others, including your family.

The vast majority of parents vaccinate their children, and that means illnesses are less likely to spread in their children's schools. When all children are immunized, we can create healthier schools for everyone.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all children have vaccines as required by the laws of their state. Strong immunization laws support healthy school environments, safe spaces where children can learn, grow and thrive.

Immunizations are one of the most important steps we can take to protect kids in the classroom. Following the AAP recommended vaccine schedule ensures that by the time your child is old enough to start kindergarten, their immune system will be ready to resist 16 diseases. This helps them stay ahead of germs so they can avoid getting sick and missing school. Vaccines keep their school friends, families and communities healthy, too. When more school kids have immunity, it's harder for dangerous contagious diseases to spread.

Sometimes, a child might have a medical reason why they should skip one or more vaccines. Medical exemptions might be temporary or permanent, based on the child and their condition.

The AAP also recommends yearly sports physicals for all children and teens. This portion of your child's back-to-school checkup helps their doctor review concerns specific to athletes like previous injuries, concussions or chronic conditions that might impact play.

Student athletes may need to submit forms showing they've had a sports physical, so adding this to your back-to-school routine saves time. During this visit, your pediatrician can also provide tips for avoiding overuse and overtraining injuries, healthy eating for athletic success and more.

Sports and other extracurricular activities can be great for kids, boosting physical activity, emotional health and a sense of belonging. If your child is interested in sports but not sure how or where to get involved, the pediatrician can help connect your family with teams and leagues in your community.

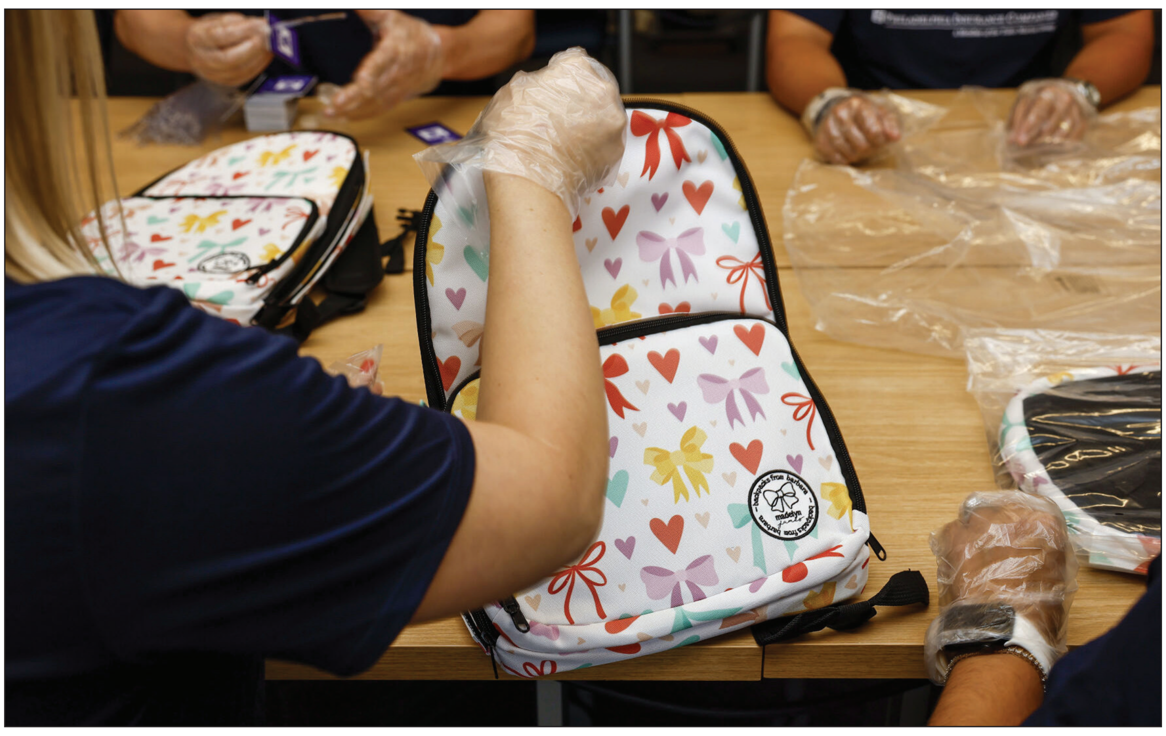
Check with your child's school to make sure you have the right forms before heading to the doctor's office. Along with basic health screenings and sports exams, you may need to file paperwork if your child takes medication at school. This could include prescriptions for asthma, ADHD, seizures or serious allergies. Coordinating with the school health team at the start of the year ensures that there are guidelines in place for handling health emergencies all year long.

Back-to-school physicals are an easy, effective way to check on your child's overall health and address any questions you might have. Seeing the doctor at least once a year builds a clear, accurate record of your child's growth and development.

Your pediatrician cares about parent and family health, too. If you're facing difficulties with housing, nutrition, health care expenses or anything else that affects your family's well-being, ask about local resources and programs that can help.

Rachel Dawkins, MD FAAP is a general pediatrician in St. Petersburg, Florida. She is Medical Director of the Johns Hopkins All Children's Care Network and is chairperson of the AAP Career Alliance.

Hospital receives 300 *very special* backpacks



Monica Herndon / The Philadelphia Inquirer / TNS

Volunteers prepare backpacks designed to hold an infusion pump and IV medication for children receiving at-home treatment for leukemia. The Madelyn James Pediatric Cancer Foundation, which created the bags, is donating 300 of them to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in honor of Barbara Friedes, a CHOP medical resident who was fatally struck by a car while biking.

Equipment packs will help kids get leukemia treatment on the go

By SARAH GANTZ
The Philadelphia Inquirer (TNS)

PHILADELPHIA – With colorful heart, bow, and flower patterns, the backpacks designed by a Philadelphia cancer philanthropy look from the outside just like the dozens of others filling store shelves as a new school year approaches.

But these backpacks have a special mission: They are designed to hold an infusion pump, IV bag and tubing for children with leukemia being treated with an at-home immunotherapy medication.

The 28-day infusion of blinatumomab allows children to spend less time in the hospital. But the bags typically provided with the drug are adult-sized – much too big for children to comfortably and safely carry.

Families have often resorted to buying children's backpacks or purses, which aren't designed to hold medical equipment.

Now a Philadelphia-area philanthropy has created a solution to help families coming to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia for treatment.

New child-sized bags designed by the Madelyn James Pediatric Cancer Foundation and Burning Tree Designs have a clear pouch and elastic straps in the front pocket to hold an infusion pump, as well as clips to keep the IV bag upright. Plastic tubing laces through the side of the bag to connect to the patient's medication port.

The foundation, created by a Philadelphia couple after the death of their daughter who was treated for leukemia at CHOP, is donating 300 of the backpacks to the hospital for future leukemia patients.

Jackie and Dan Didio, whose daughter Maddy died of leukemia in 2022 when she was 14 months old, said they hope the bags will help improve quality of life for children receiving at-home cancer treatment.

"We want to see kids running on the playground with these bags," said Jackie Didio, who lives in Philadelphia with her husband and their daughter Hannah, Maddy's twin.

Jackie Didio, cofounder and CEO of the Madelyn James Pediatric Cancer Foundation, talks about her family's experience before volunteers prepared backpacks with a flyer and a name tag at the Philadelphia Insurance Companies office in Bala Cynwyd.

Honoring a leukemia patient

Maddy was diagnosed with leukemia at 3 months old.

Didio said she felt privileged that she and her husband were able to interview cancer programs up and down the East Coast to find the right fit for Maddy. They relocated from Virginia to Philadelphia so that Maddy could be treated at CHOP.

The family's health insurance covered most of Maddy's treatment and provided a stipend to put toward their long-term hotel stay. Dan Didio kept his job by traveling between Philadelphia and Virginia.

Maddy received several different treatments at CHOP, including the CAR-T therapy pioneered at Penn that has been heralded a cure for certain types of leukemia.

But Maddy's cancer evolved, and became resistant to treatment.

After her death, the Didios decided that they wanted to honor her memory by creating a foundation that could help families with nonmedical expenses that can be an added hardship on top of significant medical costs.

The foundation gives away about $45,000 a year to families with a child being treated for leukemia to be used for rent, car payments, food, and other nonmedical expenses "that make it possible to be by your child's bedside," Didio said.

backpacks from barbara
madelyn james
backpacks from barbara

The backpack giveaway is in honor of Barbara Friedes, a CHOP medical resident who was fatally struck by a car while biking in Philadelphia last year.

Innovative backpacks for cancer care

On Tuesday, volunteers from Philadelphia Insurance Companies helped set up the backpacks, attaching key chains and filling them with back-to-school supplies at the company's Bala Cynwyd offices.

The national property, casualty, and professional liability insurance firm supported the initiative, named "Backpacks with Barbara," in honor of Barbara Friedes, a CHOP medical resident and family friend of the Didios, who was fatally struck by a vehicle while riding her bicycle last year.

The 300 backpacks given to CHOP will be distributed over the next five years, helping families to "safely and comfortably manage their child's treatment both at home and on the go," said Susan Rheingold, an attending physician with the Cancer Center at CHOP, who serves on the foundation's board.

Visit The Philadelphia Inquirer at inquirer.com.

What is the rule of 55 and how does it work?

By KAREN ROBERTS
Bankrate.com (TNS)

The rule of 55 can benefit workers who have an employer-sponsored retirement account such as a 401(k) and are looking to retire early or need access to the funds if they've lost their job near the end of their career. It can be a lifeline for workers who need cash flow and lack other viable alternatives.

Here's how the rule of 55 works and whether you should consider using it.

The rule of 55, explained

The rule of 55 is an IRS provision that allows workers who leave their job for any reason to start taking penalty-free distributions from their current employer's retirement plan in or after the year they reach age 55. Taking a distribution from a tax-qualified retirement plan, such as a 401(k), prior to age 59½ is generally subject to a 10 percent early withdrawal tax penalty.

However, the IRS' rule of 55 may allow you to receive a distribution in the year you reach age 55 or later (and before age 59½) without triggering the early penalty if your plan allows for such distributions (employers can choose to opt out if they wish). It provides a way for those looking to retire early or those who need the cash flow a way to take distributions from their retirement plans sooner than is typically allowed.

Any distribution would still be subject to an income tax withholding rate of 20 percent, however. (If it turns out that 20 percent is more than you owe based on your total taxable income, you'll get a refund after filing your yearly tax return.)

It's important to note that the rule of 55 is not available at all for traditional or Roth IRAs.

How to use the rule of 55 to retire early

Many companies have retirement plans that allow employees to take advantage of the IRS' rule of 55, but your company may not.

"Many companies see the rule as an incentive for employees to resign in order to get a penalty-free distribution, with the unintended consequence of prematurely depleting their retirement savings," says Paul Porretta, a partner at Troutman Pepper, a law firm based in New York City.

Here are the conditions that must be met and other things to consider before taking a rule of 55 withdrawal.

■ Retirement plans offer them: Your company must offer a qualified retirement plan such as a 401(k) or 403(a) or (b) that allows rule of 55 withdrawals.

■ In or after the year you turn 55: You leave a position (voluntarily or involuntarily) in or after the year you turn 55 years old.

■ Money must remain in the plan: Funds must be kept in the employer's plan before withdrawing them and you can only withdraw from your current employer's plan. If you roll them over to an IRA, you lose the rule of 55 tax protection.

■ Potential lost gains: You understand that taking early withdrawals means forfeiting any gains that you might otherwise have earned on your investments.

■ Reduce taxes: You can wait until the start of the next calendar year to begin rule of 55 withdrawals when your taxable income may be lower if you are not working.

■ Public safety worker: If you are a qualified public safety worker (police officer, firefighter, EMT, correctional officer or air traffic controller), you might be able to start five years early. However, you need a qualified plan that permits withdrawals starting in or after the year you turn 50.

As with any financial decision, be sure to check with a trusted adviser or tax professional first to avoid any unforeseen consequences.

Should you use the rule of 55?

Determining whether to take early withdrawals under the rule of 55 will depend on your unique financial situation. You'll want to have a clear understanding of your plan's rules, how much you'd need to withdraw and what your annual expenses will likely be during your early retirement years. Figuring out those issues should help you know if taking an early withdrawal is the right decision for you.

Here are some situations where taking early withdrawals might not be the right move.

■ If it would push you to a higher tax bracket. The amount of your income for the year in which you begin the withdrawal plus the early withdrawal might put you into a higher marginal tax bracket.

■ If you're required to take a lump sum. Your plan might require a one-time lump sum withdrawal, which may force you to take more money than you want and subject you to ordinary income tax liability. These funds will no longer be available as a source of tax-advantaged retirement income.

■ If you're younger than 55 years old. You might want to leave your current employer before the year in which you turn 55 and start taking withdrawals at age 55. Note this is not allowed and you will be assessed the 10 percent early withdrawal penalty.

Other important considerations

■ If you're thinking of taking a rule of 55 withdrawal, you'll also want to consider a few other things.

■ Current plan only: If you have funds in multiple former employer plans, the rule applies only to the plan of your current/most recent employer. If you have funds in multiple plans that you want to access using the rule of 55, be sure to roll over those funds into your current employer's plan (if it accepts rollovers) before you leave the employer.

■ Roll your IRA: Funds from a traditional or Roth IRA that you might want to access early can also be rolled into your current plan (while still employed) and accessed that way.

■ Withdrawals can continue: If you so choose, you can continue to make withdrawals from your former employer's plan even if you get another job before turning age 59½.

■ Use the best strategy: Be sure to time your withdrawals carefully to create a strategy that makes sense for your financial situation. Withdrawing from a taxable retirement account during a low-income year could save you in taxes, particularly if you believe your tax rate may be higher in the future.

"Bear in mind that the only real advantage of the rule of 55 is avoiding the 10 percent penalty," says Porretta. "Meanwhile, the tax deferral is sacrificed, which may turn out to be more valuable if other financial resources that are not tax-qualified can cover expenses for the coming years, allowing you to save the 401(k)/403(b) distribution until later years."

Other 401(k) early withdrawal exceptions

You may be able to access your retirement plan without a tax penalty in a few other ways, depending on your circumstances.

There is an exception called the 72(t) option which allows withdrawals from your 401(k) or IRA at any age without any penalty. This option is called SEPP (substantially equal periodic payments), and these payments are not subject to the 10 percent early withdrawal penalty. Once these distributions begin, they must continue for a period of five years or until you reach age 59 ½, whichever comes later.

Other circumstances that exempt you from the early withdrawal penalty include:

■ Total and permanent disability

■ Distributions made due to qualified disasters

■ Certain distributions to qualified reservists on active duty

■ Medical expenses exceeding 7.5 percent of adjusted gross income

■ Being a victim of domestic violence

But the IRS offers still other exceptions to the early withdrawal penalty.

Bottom line

If you can wait until you turn 59½, withdrawals after that age are not typically subject to the 10 percent IRS tax penalty. However, if you are in a financially safe position to retire early, taking advantage of the rule of 55 may be an appropriate course of action for you.

But if you have no other choice but to begin withdrawals at age 55 until you can get another position, start a business or create income in other ways, the rule of 55 may be just the short-term lifeline you're looking for.

Bob Haegele contributed.

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Dreamstime / TNS

Dreamstime / TNS

If you're serious about financial security in retirement, you can't rely on Social Security alone.

Five ways to get on the path to lifetime income

By RACHEL CHRISTIAN
Bankrate.com (TNS)

If you're serious about financial security in retirement, you can't rely on Social Security alone.

For most people, those checks cover only a fraction of their living expenses. According to the Social Security Administration, the average monthly benefit for retired workers as of July 2025 was about $2,000 a month. That barely covers rent in many cities, let alone food, health care and everything else you'll need over decades in retirement.

The pension era is also over for most workers. Outside of government jobs, pensions have largely disappeared as companies shifted the onus of saving for retirement to employees via 401(k)s and IRAs. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 15 percent of private industry (non-government) workers had access to a pension in 2023. So for most Americans, their retirement income largely depends on how well they save, invest and structure their own portfolio.

That means you'll likely need to piece together multiple sources if you want to create lifetime income – money you can rely on every month, no matter how long you live.

"Combining a variety of income streams with differing levels of growth potential, flexibility and guarantees will provide a solid balance for most retirees," says Stephen Kates, CFP and financial analyst for Bankrate.

Here are five ways to get on the path to lifetime income so you can sustain cash flow for the long haul.

1. Buy a single premium immediate annuity (SPIA)

A single-premium immediate annuity, or SPIA, is the most straightforward version of an annuity. You give an insurance company a lump sum – say $100,000 – and in return, the insurer guarantees you a fixed monthly check for the rest of your life. Payments usually begin within one year of signing the annuity contract.

What sets SPIAs apart is their simplicity. Unlike variable annuities, which tie payouts to the performance of mutual fund–like subaccounts, or indexed annuities, which use formulas linked to stock market indexes, SPIAs aren't linked to the market.

Instead, the insurer calculates your payment based on age, interest rates and life expectancy. Once the contract is signed, you know exactly what you'll receive each month. That predictability makes them function almost like a self-funded pension.

They also stand out on fees. With SPIAs, you won't see itemized costs eating into your payments each month. Instead, the insurance company builds its margin into the payout up front. That's a noteworthy departure from other annuities, especially variable annuities with income riders, which can carry annual fees of 2 or 3 percent.

The trade-off is that once you commit, the money is locked up. You can't dip back into the lump sum for emergencies. That's why some financial advisors use SPIAs to cover a client's fixed monthly needs, like housing and utilities, while using withdrawals from retirement plans and other income for other expenses.

"If your existing guaranteed income (like Social Security) doesn't cover all necessary expenses, an annuity can help fill the gap," says Kates.

2. Consider a longevity annuity

A longevity annuity is designed for the later years of retirement. Instead of paying right away, payouts start at age 75, 80 or even 85, helping protect you from outliving your savings.

A longevity annuity is simply a type of deferred income annuity. You pay the insurer a lump sum now, and they promise fixed monthly checks in the future. Because the insurer invests your money longer, the funds have room to grow into bigger payouts. The longer you defer, the less you need to invest up front to secure meaningful lifetime income.

One popular version is the Qualified Longevity Annuity Contract, or QLAC. You fund a QLAC using money from a traditional IRA or 401(k), and you can delay required minimum distributions (RMDs) on the money used to fund it.

Normally, the IRS forces you to begin RMDs at age 73, even if you don't need the cash. With a QLAC, you can shield up to $210,000 in 2025 from those withdrawals, cutting your taxable income in your 70s while setting yourself up with guaranteed income later. However, payments from a QLAC must begin no later than age 85.

Like SPIAs, longevity annuities are simple and straightforward compared to many other annuity products. You don't have to wade through participation rates, index crediting formulas or optional riders with extra charges. Costs aren't broken out in an annual fee statement, but like SPIAs, they're built into the calculation of your future payments.

The trade-off, of course, is you might not live long enough to reach the payout age. And if you die before payments begin, the insurer keeps the money unless you've purchased a special rider at an added cost.

However, for those who expect to live longer than average, longevity annuities can deliver peace of mind at a relatively low cost.

3. Create a bond ladder

If you want income without locking money away in an annuity, a bond ladder is a helpful tool.

A bond ladder is a strategy in which you buy a series of bonds that mature at different times – such as one-year, three-year, five-year and 10-year Treasury bonds. As each bond matures, you collect the principal and can either reinvest the money or spend it.

The benefit of this setup is steady, predictable cash flow and reduced interest rate risk. Instead of putting everything into one long-term bond (and getting stuck with a low rate), you spread out maturities. That way, when rates rise, you can reinvest in new bonds with higher yields.

But building a bond ladder on your own can be confusing.

"DIY investors who are familiar with building CD ladders at their local bank may find bonds to be a more complex undertaking," says Kates.

You'll need to select the right mix of maturities, know how to buy Treasurys or corporate bonds, and manage rollover decisions. That's why Kates says bringing in a financial advisor to structure and monitor the ladder can be a prudent move.

"Otherwise, sticking with CDs or bond ETFs may be a better option," he says.

4. Invest in dividend stocks

Dividend-paying stocks are another vehicle retirees use to generate income. Shares of these companies regularly return a portion of profits to shareholders, often quarterly. For example, household names like Coca-Cola (KO) or Procter & Gamble (PG) have a long history of paying reliable dividends.

The advantage is twofold: You get regular cash flow and the potential for your stock value to increase over time.

But here's the trade-off and the risk: Dividends aren't guaranteed. Companies can slash or eliminate payouts at any time and for any reason.

Despite the risk, retirees often use dividend stocks to supplement their income. Purchasing a dividend stock ETF, which spreads your money across multiple companies and sectors, can help lower the risk of relying too heavily on one company's payout. Some investors also focus on what are known as Dividend Aristocrats, or companies that have paid and raised their dividends for at least 25 straight years.

5. Own a rental property

Real estate is another classic income source for retirees. A rental property can provide monthly cash flow while also appreciating in value over time. In retirement, that steady income can feel like a second paycheck.

Of course, being a landlord isn't for everyone. Dealing with repairs, tenant headaches and vacancies can be stressful. Property managers can take some of that hassle off your plate, but they also eat into profits. And unlike an annuity, rental income isn't guaranteed – tenants might move out and unexpected costs can pile up.

Still, real estate is a tangible asset, which gives it a unique edge. Unlike other investments, property is something you can live in, pass down or sell if needed.

Bottom line

Everyone loves the idea of lifetime income, but it doesn't happen on its own. You need a plan that blends different sources. Annuities are the only tool aside from Social Security that can guarantee income, making them an important consideration. But beyond that, bond ladders, dividend stocks and real estate can all play supporting roles. A good financial advisor can help you sort through these options, weigh the trade-offs and build a strategy that fits your needs.

Key takeaways

- Social Security likely won't cover all of your expenses in retirement, and the prevalence of pensions is dwindling. This leaves those planning for retirement to piece together how they will create lifetime income for themselves during their golden years.
- Annuities are the only product that can provide guaranteed lifetime income, but other tools – like bonds, dividend stocks and real estate – can add stability and flexibility.
- There's no universal formula for creating lifetime income. The right approach depends on your risk tolerance, resources and retirement goals.

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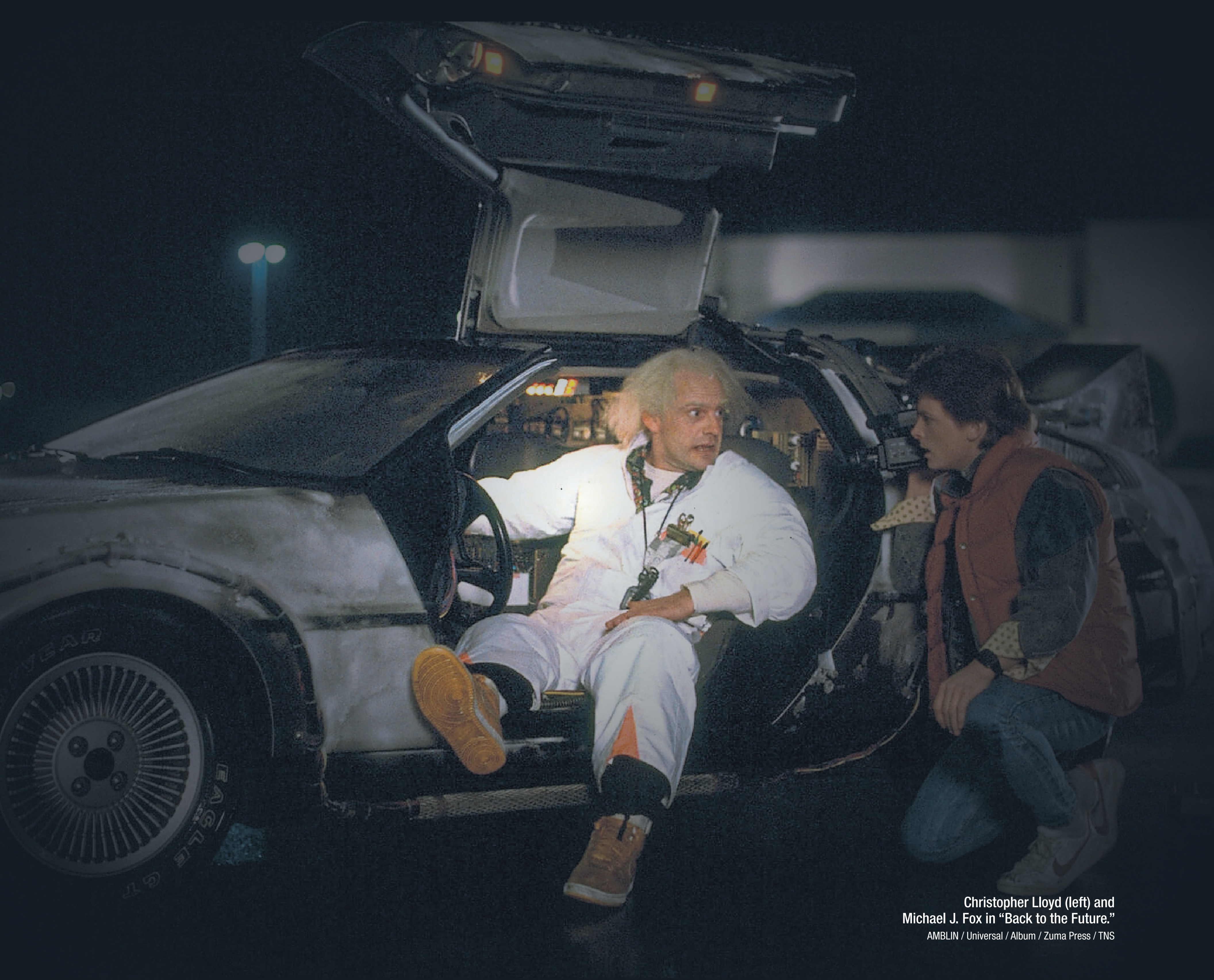
ENTERTAINMENT



Christopher Lloyd (left) and Michael J. Fox in "Back to the Future."
AMBLIN / Universal / Album / Zuma Press / TNS

Retro movies are hitting big

Why cinephiles and theaters are going back in time

By CERYS DAVIES
Los Angeles Times (TNS)

Ahead of a 50th anniversary screening of "Jaws" this month at the AMC Theatres in Century City, even the trailers were nostalgic.

Moviegoers saw previews of Marty McFly taking flight in a DeLorean in 1985's "Back to the Future," the Von Trapp family sharing a musical picnic in the Austrian hills in 1965's "The Sound of Music" and Tom Hanks launching into space in 1995's "Apollo 13."

And those are just a few of the movies that are returning to theaters this year to celebrate landmark anniversaries.

The box office shows there's a demand to be met, as many classic titles outearn various new releases during opening weekends.

Over Labor Day weekend, "Jaws" came in as the second-highest-grossing movie with a domestic opening of $8.2 million, behind Zach Cregger's horror hit "Weapons." Steven Spielberg's breakout blockbuster was shown in 3,200 theaters and made around $15 million worldwide. Earlier this year, the 20th anniversary screening of "Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith" also ranked second with $25 million for its opening weekend, under Ryan Coogler's "Sinners." It raked in about $55 million worldwide, bringing the title's total gross box office to more than $900 million.

It's almost as if movie studios, filmgoers and theater owners alike are pining for a time when the movie business, now struggling more than five years after the COVID-19 pandemic, was the center of popular culture in the U.S. Before social media and Netflix dominated people's attention.

David Berger, who owns the Ojai Playhouse, a 111-year-old theater with one screen and 200 seats, finds that when studios come to him with a digitally restored classic, he'll probably see strong attendance. On Sept. 10, he played a 40th anniversary screening of "The Breakfast Club" and sold 125 tickets.

"It's about getting away from streaming and taking a break from your phone and the world – really just letting the magic of movies do its thing," Berger said. "So, we book a lot of nostalgic repertory anniversary films, and they do really well. Sales overall are really up."

Studio executives and moviegoers offer competing theories about why older titles are getting traction on the big screen. Some see it as an anniversary year coincidence. Others look at it as a way to cushion theaters' thin movie slates, which have not recovered from the pandemic. Some think it's a way to keep movie theaters in business, as these screenings tend to happen in the middle of the week and help maintain steady crowds.

By the end of 2025, there will have been roughly 100 anniversary and re-release showings brought to screens around the country, according to Comscore. In 2019, Comscore shows that there were a little over 60 re-release and anniversary screenings.

Before the pandemic, most such screenings were for one or two days and were hosted by specialized distributors, such as Fathom Entertainment. Re-releases and anniversaries weren't often screened as traditional releases from major studios. That's been changing ever since.

Paul Dergarabedian, a senior media analyst at Comscore, says audiences should expect an uptick of re-releases whenever a year ends with a 0 or a 5.

Titles with loyal fanbases, like 2005's "Pride & Prejudice" ($6 million), 1990's "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" ($4 million) and 1975's "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" ($1.1 million) have capitalized on this market. These films didn't have a chance to celebrate in 2020, when theaters were closed because of COVID-19.

The rising interest has boosted the business of Fathom, which for more than 20 years has specialized in bringing oldies back to theaters, as well as various documentaries, performing arts shows and faith-based content. Chief Executive Ray Nutt has also noted an increased interest in the area. Anniversary showings of these "classics" tend to make up between 20 percent and 40 percent of Fathom's annual revenue, equating to $20 million or more.

"I'm proud to say that over the last two years, we've increased our revenue by 45 percent and 48 percent respectively," said Nutt. "We've had record-breaking years, and classics have been a really important part of that."

Fathom and Lionsgate are gearing up for the return of the "Twilight" saga to theaters for its 20th anniversary. All five films, along with roundtable footage with author Stephenie Meyer, will be screening around the country from Oct. 29 to Nov. 2. Kevin Grayson, Lionsgate's head of distribution, said the series is slated to screen in about 1,000 theaters. But with strong presales, he said the footprint will probably expand to 1,500 to 2,000 locations.

"'Twilight' has been out for a long time," Grayson said. "But after seeing the significant ticket sales it has already brought in, you can tell people want that communal experience."

Executives say these showing are good for business and come with little downside.

Studios can dust off a movie they already own and create hype through marketing. The screenings may appeal to fans who may have never seen the movie on the big screen before. While they're not as profitable as a massive new blockbuster, the additional revenue makes them worth the effort.

"We make a real business out of [these screenings] every single year," said Jim Orr, Universal Pictures' president of domestic theatrical distribution. "Everyone understands that the best way to experience a movie is truly on the big screen."

Even with re-releases, franchises come out on top.

Disney had a 30th anniversary screening of "Toy Story" over the weekend, ahead of the new "Toy Story 5" hitting theaters next year. The studio is also presenting a re-release of "Avatar: The Way of Water," a few months before the newest installment, "Avatar: Fire and Ash," arrives in December.

"It's expensive to market a movie on a global basis," said Andrew Cripps, Disney's theatrical distribution head. "When you've got an established franchise and you're building on something that's had an audience in the past, it's a lot easier to build your campaign on top of that, rather than starting from scratch."

Last year, there were indicators that demonstrated the audience's growing demand to see older movies on the big screen. "Interstellar" earned $15.2 million for its Imax re-entry, and "Coraline" achieved $34 million to commemorate its 15th anniversary.

Many moviegoers attending an evening screening of "Jaws" said they wanted to see the movie "the way it was intended," embracing the communal experience of fear and laughter in the theater.

"I haven't seen 'Jaws' in years, and seeing it on the big screen felt ceremonial in a way," said Culver City-based Ella Paseua, a recent subscriber to AMC's Stubs A-List subcription program. "I could watch it at home. But these anniversary screenings are meant for the community. People were applauding when the shark was caught. You don't get that at home."

Kyle Kaplan / Bleecker Street / TNS

Elton John, left, Michael McKean, Harry Shearer and Christopher Guest in "Spinal Tap II: The End Continues."

MOVIE REVIEW

'Spinal Tap II: The End Continues' is a joy

By GEMMA WILSON
The Seattle Times (TNS)

The crimped hair may be gray, but the hair metal still rocks: Spinal Tap is back, baby.

That's right, one of England's loudest and most punctual (and still fictional) heavy metal bands is getting back together for one last show, because it's contractually obligated to do so. And one dedicated filmmaker is there to capture the process.

Much as in the 1984 mockumentary "This Is Spinal Tap," "Spinal Tap II: The End Continues" starts with an introduction from Rob Reiner (the film's actual director) appearing as filmmaker Marty DiBergi, who fell hard for a band called Spinal Tap in the 1960s and ended up chronicling a fateful American tour 20 years later.

Let's meet that band: Nigel Tufnel, lead guitar (Christopher Guest); David St. Hubbins, lead singer (Michael McKean); Derek Smalls, bass (Harry Shearer); and a series of drummers who just kept dying. (Reiner, Guest, McKean and Shearer also co-wrote "This Is Spinal Tap" and "STII," and most of the Spinal Tap songs within them.)

"This Is Spinal Tap" gifted us with the expression "turn it up to 11," popularized the modern mockumentary genre (and the word mockumentary) and propelled the careers of actor-improvisers who have gone on to create some incredible comedy over the past several decades – Shearer most notably as a voice actor on "The Simpsons," Guest as the creator of mockumentary style films including "Waiting for Guffman" and "Best in Show," which McKean has also appeared in.

One of the marvels of the 1984 film is its earnestness, a bone-deep sincerity that plumbed new depths in the drama-as-comedy of the mockumentary style.

Since 1984, the members of Spinal Tap have played live, released short films and music videos, and recorded albums with songs that have genuinely landed on the charts. (If you're having trouble keeping fact separated from fiction, don't worry, you're not alone.)

'Spinal Tap II: The End Continues'

★★★ ½

MPA rating: R (for language including some sexual references)

Running time: 1:23

How to watch: Now in theaters

But 15 years ago, for mysterious reasons, they stopped playing together or speaking to each other. What happened? And where have Nigel, David and Derek been all these years?

Here are just a few of the answers revealed in "STII": running a cheese and guitar shop in a quaint English village; playing in a California mariachi band and scoring murder podcasts; and running a glue museum and maybe getting involved in a crypto scam.

After Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood put the band's song "Big Bottom" back into the zeitgeist (sample lyric: "I saw her on Monday, twas my lucky bun day"), the daughter of Spinal Tap's deceased former manager cashes in on a contract she inherited that requires one final performance from Spinal Tap.

And so, the band gets back together, with some special guest stars. After more than 40 years in the rock trenches, these blokes have some street cred, but I won't spoil the film's high-wattage musical appearances for you.

One newcomer worth mentioning is an incredibly funny performance by Chris Addison as Spinal Tap's new agent, who is obsessed with living in a post-K-pop world, would be very happy if one of the band members died for publicity reasons, and suffers from a medical condition "called Saint Cecelia's Curse; I can't process music or replicate it."

As the latest chapter in a long-standing story, the film does exactly what it's supposed to do: lets us spend some time with characters we love and meet them anew now that they're all in their late 70s or early 80s, and reminds us of the greatest hits without dwelling too much in old footage.

It doesn't have the same wild unfamiliar sparkle as the original, but that's the point. The joys of this film are similar to the joys of a beloved (real) band's reunion concert: watching decades of personal and musical history play out onstage, cheering for the revolutionaries of their day and, in the case of the actor-creators of Spinal Tap, seeing what more than 40 years of commitment to a bit – and to each other – really looks like.

SERIES REVIEW

The BBC docuseries ***'Human'*** is an exhilarating origin story

By ROBERT LLOYD
Los Angeles Times (TNS)

It can seem of late that the experiment in evolution we call Homo sapiens has gone horribly wrong, notwithstanding my ability to touch type letters that make words that make sentences, and perform all the little operations that feed them into this thing we call a newspaper. Humanity is a word we use to describe what is supposed to be our essential nature – caring, compassionate, self-sacrificing. But you don't have to look far to see its inverse – people being irrational, superstitious, fearful, cruel. That sapiens is Latin for "wise" can just seem like an ironic joke.

How did we get here – for better and worse? The early millennia of our species' history – hundreds of thousands of years – is the subject of "Human," an exhilarating five-part BBC series premiering this week as part of the PBS series "Nova." (Support your local station.) Paleoanthropologist Ella Al-Shamahi presents in the British style, narrating in person as she travels the world, anywhere traces of our prehistoric ancestors may be found, exploring caves, pressing through jungles, scampering up mountains, sailing on the Nile, crossing deserts and snowy wastes – often seen from far above with apparently no one else around for miles. (How did she get there, you may ask yourself.)

Of Yemeni and Syrian heritage, Al-Shamahi grew up in Birmingham, England; earned degrees in evolutionary biology and taxonomy and biodiversity from Imperial College London and was named a National Geographic Emerging Explorer in 2015. Her previous television work includes "Neanderthals – Meet Your Ancestors" (2017), "Jungle Mystery: Lost Kingdoms of the Amazon" (2020) and "Tutankhamun: Secrets of the Tomb" (2022). (She also does stand-up comedy.) Onscreen, she has the charismatic presence of a movie adventurer, like a chill Lara Croft, while her measured voice-over narration sounds something like Cate Blanchett setting the scene at the beginning of a "Lord of the Rings" movie. The series, which visits ancient sites and ongoing digs, where healthy-looking young people slowly brush away the dust of millennia, does make paleoanthropology look kind of sexy.

As science, "Human" acknowledges that what we know is not all that we will know; fossils and artifacts tell us a lot – and suggest a lot more – but it's not like anyone left a journal. Recent discoveries remake earlier discoveries and reset the timelines as new pieces of the puzzle are found and better tools to analyze them are invented. These are not your grandfathers' cavemen (though many actually did live in caves).

'Human'

How to watch: Premieres at 9 p.m. ET Sept. 17 on PBS and airs weekly on Wednesdays

HUMAN
ORIGINS

PBS / TNS

The documentary series "Human," debuts Sept. 17 on PBS.

The thrust of the tale is that we are the only surviving human species among several that once roamed the Earth, a line that has been around more than 300,000 years. ("Time and time again," Al-Shamahi observes, our survival led "to the demise of everyone else.") There were also Homo erectus, the first to leave Africa; Homo floresiensis, nicknamed "Hobbits," a tiny race that lived on the Indonesian island of Flores; the Denisovans, who ranged across Asia; and the Neanderthals, who had "a vibrant, thriving culture" in spite of the picture in your head, headed north into Europe and, having hooked up with our gang, left almost everyone now alive – apart from those with strictly sub-Saharan roots – a pinch of their DNA. "It's just the loveliest thought, isn't it, that they live on and exist within us," says Al-Shamahi.

It's a story of progress, obviously (for the Neanderthals, not so much, though they had a good run). As you may recall from school, hunter-gatherers followed the food; agriculture turned nomads into settlers, who turned wolves into dogs and sheep into wool. Settlers became city dwellers as populations increased and coalesced; large populations created specialized trades and encouraged cooperation, even as tribalism was "[scaled] to the size of a city," and "tribal skirmishes" became "state warfare." People!

Recreations of prehistoric life are happily kept to a minimum, and made suitably blurry and distant. The fun of the show is in the present world – it is fun, and quite beautifully filmed – following Al-Shamahi, as she traces fossilized footprints in White Sands, New Mexico; visits Göbeklitepe, in southwest Turkey, "the oldest temple unearthed anywhere on the planet," 6,000 years older than Stonehenge; picks leeches off her arm ("They're actually quite irritating"); and exults over historically significant skulls, ancient tools and arrowheads and beads. Her excitement is not so much contagious as it is seductive.

Al-Shamahi takes her story up to the invention of writing, where prehistory may be said to end. (The alphabet, in which symbols represented sounds and eventually turned into the one I'm using here, was, in her telling, created by "lowly migrant workers," mining turquoise for Egyptian jewelry. Income inequality: another human invention.)

"None of this was a foregone conclusion," Al-Shamahi says, standing on London's Millennium Footbridge, before the jagged glass peaks of modern British architecture. That it might have turned out very different for "the very last species of humans to have walked this Earth," that Homo sapiens were not destined to win out, merely the best adapted to … adaptation, is a point she returns to through the series. Even as she celebrates "our cultural drive to come together, to learn from and inspire each other, to go further than what has gone before," sounding a little like Captain Kirk, she knows too much of the past to predict the future.

"Is this basically the whole of our story?" Al-Shamahi asks. "Or are we on the first act or even prologue with a long future ahead of us? We have no idea … You never could have predicted how we got here, but where we go next is up to all of us."

Good luck with that.

Leon Neal / Getty Images / TNS

Harry Wilkinson, left, and Joe Carroll of Maruja performs during the Glastonbury Festival at Worthy Farm, Pilton, on June 28, 2024, in Glastonbury, England.

Here's how Maruja crafted their debut, 'Pain to Power'

'It's pretty hardcore'

By JULIUS MILLER
Los Angeles Times (TNS)

LOS ANGELES — Maruja's music isn't merely following the times; it's a reflection of them.

The rock band, whose debut album "Pain to Power" was released Friday, has carved out a niche in today's music scene, garnering praise and raising eyebrows for their innovative instrumentation and song composition.

But the Manchester-born quartet – Harry Wilkinson, Matt Buonaccorsi, Joe Carroll and Jacob Hayes – has already done the forming, recording, and touring trifecta.

This can largely be credited to their three EPs, "Knocknarea," "Connla's Well" and Tir na nÓg," released in 2023, 2024 and 2025, respectively. Each project draws on elements of post-punk, jazz rock and art rock that blend in an enthusiastic musical cocktail.

"We began touring, and then it kind of hasn't stopped since," Carroll says with a laugh, via a Zoom call. "That was about two-and-a-half years ago... towards the end of last year, we did about four months, 47 shows all around Europe."

And they haven't let up. As soon as they got home from touring, they were right back to it. Altogether, the "best ideas" of "Pain to Power" were written and recorded over the span of two months: January and February of this year, when the band made the studio its second home.

"We had to just go 'ham' in the studio for six days a week. It's pretty hardcore," he says.

Some tracks had "spawned from jams" before being shelved for a while: "Some of them took two hours, some of them took two years," he puts it plainly.

But this wasn't an issue for the band, as they picked up those "jams" like they'd never put them down.

"All the songs we've written, they feel like they're still within the same world, but just through different filters sometimes," Buonaccorsi says.

"Born to Die," which existed for the better part of the last couple of years, represents the halfway point in the album and features one of its most impressive sonic shifts. It also takes on the herculean task of merging many of the ongoing tones and deepest themes of the project.

"I know what this life is worth/ We are universal spirits/ And our kingdom is this Earth," Wilkinson opens, as if a light has shone down on him.

The song is soft, with a distant, wailing sax peeking in for a brief moment among drum lines. It's almost symphonic, carrying on for almost seven minutes before descending into a lulling silence.

"Our feelings are just visitors/ Competing for attention/ Avoiding every trigger/ While still reaching for ascension," he continues, in a quasi-monologue.

Hayes breaks in, thrashing his drums alongside Wilkinson's guitar and an enthralling bass line from Buanoccorsi. Naturally, Carroll's sax follows suit. The song then recedes into serenity once again, before picking up on "Break The Tension."

It's an exhilarating ride that carries on over the rest of the album, ebbing and flowing between chaos and calm. A lot of "Pain to Power's" strength is in its latter half, and particularly across the three track run that is "Trenches," "Zaytoun" and "Reconcile," the album's nearly 10-minute closer.

"What you're seeing is these notions of pain that we are getting out of us in these songs," Wilkinson explains. "These aggressive songs like 'Bloodsport,' 'Look Down On Us'… we're turning all of that aggression and that pain and anger into something beautiful, and that's reflected in a track like 'Saoirse.'"

"It's quite a dynamic album," Buonaccorsi adds. "You've got quieter songs, more intimate songs, and you've got loud, bombastic, crazy, aggressive songs, but they all still feel like they're part of the same sonic universe."

"Saoirse," the third track on the album, reflects the somber first half of "Born to Die."

"It's our differences that make us beautiful," Wilkinson sings repeatedly, like he's muttering out a mantra. Sure, it's a bit on-the-nose, but it embodies what Maruja is all about.

"Saoirse," which translates to "freedom" or "liberty" in Irish, has historically morphed into a term representing the country's desire for independence from British rule and cultural autonomy. These allusions to Ireland are ever-present in the band's creations, with titles such as "Tir na nÓg" and "Connla's Well" specked across their discography.

But how did a British outfit become synonymous with Irish activism?

"When we were recording 'Knockarea,' my dad started getting really ill and that led to me connecting with his parents a lot more, and they told me about my great-granddad, who was a photographer," Carroll remembers.

"We ended up using all of his photos for the early stages of the music… all the black and white stuff is my great granddad's photos in Ireland… I got really into my Irish heritage, and I'm really proud of it… and feel very connected to the culture and the land," he continues.

The group says it has a strong correlation with their avid support for Palestinian rights, which the Irish have shown for decades: "They were the first Western government to speak up in public support for the Palestinian people," Hayes says.

In that, they're also speaking out against their home, Britain, which they say is "entirely complicit" in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

"The colonization of Ireland from the British Empire, and then the… secret police of the Black and Tans [in Palestine] is a direct relation to the colonialist and imperialist ways of the British government today," Hayes says.

According to the Irish Times, Winston Churchill demanded a "picked force of white gendarmerie" be deployed in Palestine after facing unrest in 1921. The force was composed of "members of both" his Auxiliaries and Black and Tans, who were "assigned to Palestine once their presence in Ireland was no longer deemed necessary."

"In England, we just see this deranged hypocrisy continue to lord over our political landscape," he adds. "We want to give voice to those who are voiceless… If we can help raise awareness, raise a message, and… highlight the complicity of our government, we've got to do it."

On "Bloodsport," this is clear, with Wilkinson crying out pleas to the world.

"Complicit in the narrative of pacified killings it's a/ Sore sight when you gotta choose/ The lesser of two evils either one will prove/ That we're socially in apathy what's left to lose?"

Their activism is heavily tied to their music and has undoubtedly contributed to some of the band's recognition on a global scale. But, to them, it's just part of their responsibility, and their music is an indication of that.

"We're just reflecting our environment," he explains. "Our lives are downtrodden with politics and with war and with the world suffering."

Buonaccorsi chimes in, referencing a quote from "the great" Nina Simone: "An artist's duty, as far as I'm concerned, is to reflect the times."

"It's our job … to speak about things that really matter to us, things that we feel like should not be happening in this world," he says. "The barbarity and horror that we've never been able to see in our lifetimes… now, we see it before our eyes on phone screens."

BOOKS

Caricature artist draws the famous and the rest of us

By RICHARD CHIN
The Minnesota Star Tribune (TNS)

Jeff Wheeler / The Minnesota Star Tribune

Jen Oblinger takes a selfie with Robin Schwartzman and the caricature she drew of her during a 3M Open event at the Renaissance Hotel in Minneapolis on July 22.

Robin Schwartzman is a woman of 10,000 faces.

That's at least how many faces she's drawn over the past 23 years as a professional caricature artist.

The Minneapolis resident wears other artistic hats: She's a lecturer who teaches 3D modeling and digital fabrication at the University of Minnesota Department of Art, where she got her MFA degree. She's also co-founder of a miniature golf design studio called A Couple of Putts.

But the 39-year-old has been a caricature artist the longest. When she was 15, she landed a summer high school job drawing people at the Pennsylvania amusement park near where she grew up.

The arty teenager was given a bit of training, a marker and an easel.

"Then they throw you out on the midway and say, 'Good luck,'" Schwartzman said.

At first, "you do a lot of bad drawings," she said. But with repetition, she got better. "It's a lot of rinse and repeat."

Now she's really good. Award-winning, in fact.

She's also an advocate and promoter of the art form as the current president of the International Society of Caricature Artists, a 1,500-member organization that hosts an annual conference with competitions Schwartzman describes as "the Olympics of caricature."

There's also a sort of Oscar award for the caricature artist of the year. It's called the Golden Nosey.

Schwartzman hasn't won a Golden Nosey yet, though as an expert in 3D digital fabrication, she's in charge of manufacturing the trophy.

She has gotten titles in competitions such as Outstanding Monochromatic Technique, Outstanding Minimalist Technique and World's Fastest Caricaturist. She won a first place for Outstanding Black & White Technique at the 2025 Japan Caricature Grand Prix.

And now she has a new book, " Drawing Influence: Movers and Shakers of the 21st Century," which includes black and white drawings capturing the faces of more than 150 iconic figures of the past 25 years from politics, business, entertainment, sports and pop culture, along with a telling quote from each notable.

For example, her drawing of football legend Tom Brady is accompanied by his declaration: "I've never eaten a strawberry in my life."

Elon Musk is drawn with one of his cars saying, "I would like to die on Mars. Just not on impact."

"It's important to remember that you're born naked, and the rest is drag," according to RuPaul, who is drawn in drag and not.

Schwartzman still takes occasional jobs at county fairs, Fourth of July festivals, weddings, holiday events, even dog birthday parties, doing the kind of quick drawings of a live subject that she specialized in as a teenager.

She recently drew partygoers at a downtown Minneapolis hotel who were playing in a Pro-Am golf event that was part of the 3M Open.

"They sit down, the marker hits the paper, and I start drawing," she said of the live drawings which might take her three to five minutes to complete. "I'm not thinking much. I'm just putting marker to paper."

She has to be fast, especially if there's a line of people waiting to have their image drawn. Her main tool for this sort of work is an ordinary Crayola brand marker.

"I've used every marker in the book over the years," she said. "This one has the right thickness. They're best when they're new and they're nice and juicy."

Some faces are easier to draw than others.

"Some people sit in the chair, and I say, 'Yes!'" Schwartzman said. "Some faces practically draw themselves."

She said older men often have acquired the faces that caricature artists like to see in front of them: "Really prominent features that are easy to play with."

"When someone sits, you can feel right away if they have a sense of humor. Then I can really have fun," she said. "We have the best job. We get paid to make silly pictures and make people laugh."

The black and white drawings she did for her book are more considered and intentional, created in her home studio on an iPad using a digital illustration app called Procreate.

After studying photographs of a subject, she sometimes spends hours refining a single drawing.

"There's an energy that you put through each line, and I think that's what comes through," Schwartzman said.

She said she once spent about 14 hours on a drawing of Idris Elba, while Timothée Chalamet took only 30 or 40 minutes.

"Every single face is an entirely different challenge and puzzle," Schwartzman said. "To me it never gets boring."

Sometimes she takes commissions. A company might want a drawing of an executive or someone wants an unusual gift for a spouse.

"I once drew a llama at a county fair," she said.

Her drawings may remind you of the artwork of the late Al Hirschfeld, a caricature artist famous for depicting Broadway stars and other celebrities in the pages of the New York Times, the New Yorker and Playbill.

Schwartzman says Hirschfeld was an early inspiration and influence in her work.

But she's also inspired by the multitude of styles she encounters at caricature artist conventions. She estimates there are about 20 to 30 working caricature artists in Minnesota.

Caricature artists can be misunderstood as creators of unskilled drawings.

"There is a lot of bad street art," Schwartzman admits.

But "the best of the best are truly some of the most genius artists that I know," she said. "When I attend a caricature conference, I feel I learn more in a week than in a year at art school."

She also exercises her skills by participating in something called the Caricature Resolution, where artists around the world agree to draw the same list of 31 people, one for every day in January.

The January 2025 challenge involved drawing cast members of television shows like "The Walking Dead" and "Stranger Things."

"It's become a worldwide phenomena," Schwartzman said.

Schwartzman said some potential subjects are concerned that caricature artists are just seeking to highlight facial flaws.

But "we don't think of it as flaws. We think every face is beautiful in its own way. We want to highlight the things that make you you," Schwartzman said. "There's a way of perceiving the world and push and pull shapes while maintaining that likeness."

Schwartzman admits she hates to draw herself, but she knows what it's like to be on the other side of the easel. At caricature conventions, the artists spend a lot of time drawing each other.

She has dozens of drawings of herself by other artists in a multitude of styles, which you can find on her Instagram page at @robin schwartzman. Some drawings emphasize her nose. Some highlight her heavy eyelids.

"We call them hamburger eyes," she said.

Some are done in "beasthead" style, so extremely abstract that they barely resemble a human face.

"I've had other artists draw me as a giraffe," she said.

"In my opinion, a good caricature looks and feels more like that subject than the subject itself," Schwartzman wrote in her book. "It captures the essence of a person."

BESTSELLERS

Here are the bestsellers for the week that ended Saturday, Sept. 6, compiled from data from independent and chain bookstores, book wholesalers and independent distributors nationwide, powered by Circana BookScan.

Hardcover fiction

1. The Hallmarked Man. Robert Galbraith. Mulholland
2. Katabasis (deluxe ed.). R.F. Kuang. Harper Voyager
3. Wild Reverence. Rebecca Ross. Saturday
4. Framed in Death. J.D. Robb. St. Martin's
5. Buckeye. Patrick Ryan. Random House
6. Billion-Dollar Ransom. James Patterson and Duane Swierczynski. Little, Brown
7. Apostle's Cove. William Kent Krueger. Atria
8. The Color of Death. Trey Gowdy and Christopher Greyson. Harper Influence
9. Quicksilver (deluxe ed.). Callie Hart. Forever
10. Atmosphere. Taylor Jenkins Reid. Ballantine

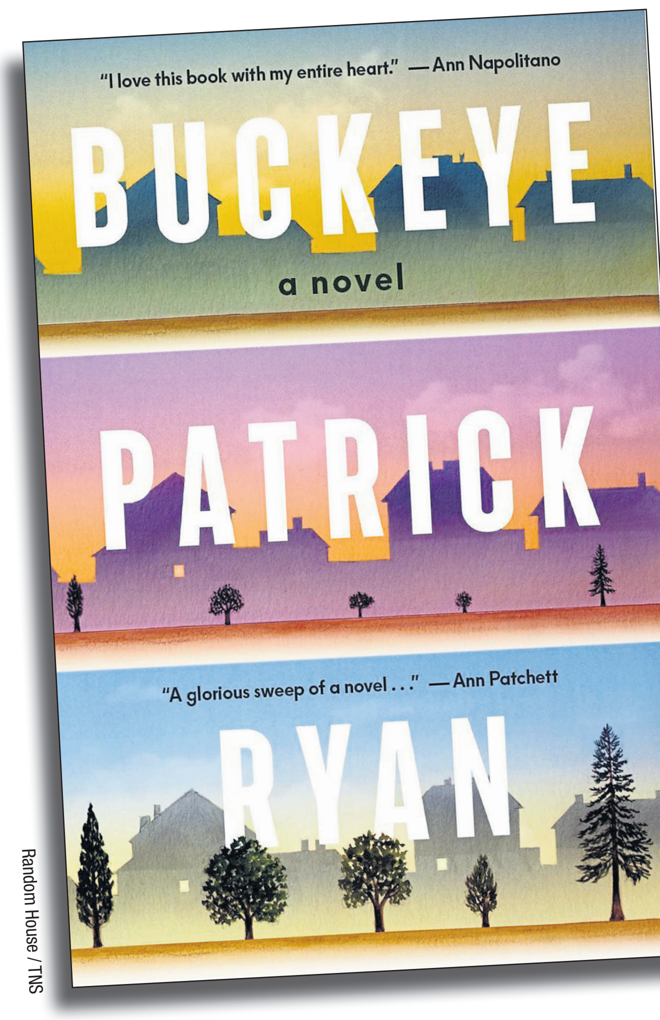
Hardcover nonfiction

1. The Avatar: The Return of the Ancients & the Future of America. Jonathan Cahn. Frontline
2. The Let Them Theory: A Life-Changing Tool That Millions of People Can't Stop Talking About. Mel Robbins. Hay House
3. Sally's Baking 101: Foolproof Recipes from Easy to Advanced. Sally McKenney. Clarkson Potter
4. Sister Wife: A Memoir of Faith, Family, and Finding Freedom. Christine Brown Woolley. Gallery
5. Lions and Scavengers: The True Story of America (and Her Critics). Ben Shapiro. Threshold
6. Mission Driven: The Path to a Life of Purpose. Mike Hayes. Grand Central
7. It Doesn't Have to Hurt: Your Smart Guide to a Pain-Free Life. Sanjay Gupta. Simon & Schuster)
8. Don't Believe Everything You Think: Why Your Thinking Is the Beginning & End of Suffering (Expanded Edition). Joseph Nguyen. Authors Equity
9. You Bet Your Stretch Marks: Finding Beauty and Worth in the Ways Motherhood Marks Our Bodies and Souls. Abbie Halberstadt. Harvest House
10. Unbreakable: A Woman's Guide to Aging with Power. Vonda Wright. Rodale

Reprinted from Publishers Weekly.

REVIEW

There's a lot of love in Ohio-set novel 'Buckeye'



"I love this book with my entire heart." —Ann Napolitano
BUCKEYE
a novel
PATRICK
"A glorious sweep of a novel . . ." —Ann Patchett
RYAN

Random House / TNS

By MAREN LONGBELLA
The Minnesota Star Tribune (TNS)

I loved "Buckeye," by Patrick Ryan. In fact, if I were talking to you about this book instead of writing about it, I would add a few more "loveds," accompanied by gestures emphasizing how much.

Saying I loved it is the easy part, of course. Telling you why I loved it won't be difficult, either. The hard part might be shutting up about it.

"Buckeye," which is dedicated to novelist Ann Patchett and her husband Karl VanDevender, opens with Cal Jenkins. He is minding his father-in-law's hardware store in Bonhomie, Ohio, a town that "wasn't nearly so small that everyone knew everyone else, but it was small enough that, sooner or later, most everyone felt as if they'd laid eyes on most everyone else." Then a woman, a stranger, walks in asking if he has a radio.

"Why isn't it on?" she asks.

She "looked agitated, impatient," Cal thinks, and finds out why as the Zenith wheezes to life: Germany has surrendered to Allied forces. World War II is ending.

"Do you think people will start coming home?" she asks.

"From Europe? I hope so," Cal says. "But Hirohito's still giving us a run. They might send those guys over to the Pacific."

Instead of replying, the woman, Margaret Salt ("like the shaker") kisses him.

With that kiss – and a handful of masterfully detailed pages that strike at the deeply personal nature of a universal event – Ryan sweeps us up in Cal and Margaret's moment, one that has implications for the rest of the novel and all involved.

"Involving" and "unbelievably well-written" are the best ways to describe "Buckeye." There is nary a false note as Ryan carries out the interplay between his characters' lives and the historical stage. Big forces are at work, but he keeps his eye focused on Cal and Margaret and their respective spouses and children as they grapple with life – and all-consuming secrets – during and after WWII and leading into the Vietnam War years.

I felt less like a reader and more like an observer, an embedded one who hoped for the best but feared the worst for the denizens of Bonhomie. Someone wasn't going to come out of this unscathed; most likely it was going to be me as I rode an emotional roller coaster that had me changing allegiances as characters revealed more of themselves. The telling of the story alternates among characters, the change in perspectives fluid, the different voices adding to the plot in ways I didn't realize I needed until the moments arrived.

I didn't want to leave the pages of "Buckeye" and neither will you. It's the kind of book that reads like the culmination of a writer's career – a magnum opus of depth and care. It's hard to believe Ryan has anything left for future endeavors after funneling so much into "Buckeye." Hopefully, he does. Just imagine what's on the horizon.

AUTOMOTIVE

Are EVs really better for the environment?

Study checks role of coal, battery and range

By SUMMER BALLENTINE
The Detroit News (TNS)

Ulysse Bellier / AFP / Getty Images / TNS

The Mount Storm coal-fired power station, owned by Dominion Energy, is seen in Mount Storm, West Virginia, on June 30.

Electric vehicles in the United States produce fewer greenhouse gases than gas automobiles, even when factoring in battery-making emissions, limited range during bad weather and coal-fired power grids, according to a new analysis.

The University of Michigan study, published in an American Chemical Society journal, compared projected lifetime emissions of battery, hybrid and gas-powered vehicles from the 2025 model year. On average, gas-powered vehicles will produce 70 percent more greenhouse gases than EVs with 300-mile charging ranges.

The data include emissions from battery and auto production, a roughly 200,000-mile vehicle lifespan and final recycling or other disposal of the vehicle. Data show EVs create less pollution than plug-in hybrids and other hybrids; plug-in hybrids are more environmentally friendly than other hybrids; hybrids create less pollution than gas-powered vehicles; and smaller vehicles of any powertrain are less emission-intensive than SUVs and pickups.

Pickups, SUVs, sedans and other vehicles used for personal transportation make up roughly 16 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, according to the study, and individuals' vehicle choices "will play a significant role" in reducing pollutants.

"Yes, there are differences in terms of how much benefit but again, we want to make it clear that our study shows advantages everywhere in the country," said Greg Keoleian, a study author and co-director of the University of Michigan's Center for Sustainable Systems, "which demonstrates that consumers everywhere in the country play a key role in addressing climate pollution and in lowering climate pollution."

The adoption challenge

Widespread EV adoption lags in the United States, where battery-powered models make up roughly 8 percent of the market share and account for at most about 5 percent of vehicles in use. Analysts expect a surge in sales through the end of September, when legislation signed by President Donald Trump will end $7,500 tax credits for buyers and lessees. After that, automakers are bracing for a steep drop-off in sales, at least temporarily.

While many auto industry analysts and insiders still have faith battery-powered automobiles will dominate sometime in the future, the short-term fate of electrification has been shaken by "openly antagonistic" policies enacted under Trump, said Sam Abuelsamid, vice president of market research at auto communications firm Telemetry.

Most recently, Trump's administration announced plans to scrap federal rules on vehicle tailpipe emissions, which have been a driving force in pressuring automakers to electrify their fleets.

"Clean energy incentives, tax credits, and regulations enacted during the previous administration were designed to build a new landscape for American manufacturing by fostering technological advances and encouraging domestic manufacturing," U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell, D-Ann Arbor, said in a statement.

"They worked, and led to a surge in EV investments, driving sales, lowering costs for consumers, and creating thousands of good-paying union jobs. The rollback of these incentives and regulations reverses all that progress and puts us on a dangerous path."

Buyer concerns about high sticker prices, limited access to quick charging, and anxiety about how far an EV will go before its battery needs a boost have also limited sales growth.

U.S. Rep. Tim Walberg, R-Tipton, said in a statement that forcing automakers to electrify faster than market demand is not a viable policy: "While I am not against EVs or reducing transportation emissions, we must not implement misguided regulations that limit consumer choice or exacerbate the pollution they are trying to address.

"Even after the Biden-Harris administration's Green New Deal giveaways and costly regulations, electric vehicles continued to sit unpurchased on auto dealership lots due to a lack of consumer demand," Walberg added. "Government mandates that force the mass production of EVs, only for them to sit idly on lots, don't help with emissions reductions – they make it worse."Even without government pressure or incentives, Abuelsamid said, the industry will move toward electrification.

"People are not going to stop buying EVs just because Trump says they're bad," he said. "Manufacturers, despite slowing some product rollout, are still producing EVs and are going to continue producing EVs."

Still, recent developments demonstrate the industry's slow and uneven march toward electrification. Last month, Ford Motor Co. said it would invest $2 billion at its Louisville Assembly Plant to build a $30,000 electric midsize pickup while delaying the start of production at a Tennessee battery plant until 2027. And this week, General Motors Co. said it would temporarily reduce planned production of EVs at plants in Kansas and Tennessee because of soft demand.

'Overwhelming' benefit

A University of Michigan-made calculator based on the study's data allows users to compare greenhouse gas emissions between two vehicles on a county-by-county basis. The local power supply matters. Fossil fuels such as natural gas and oil, among the top power sources in Michigan, create more pollution. Wind, hydroelectric, solar and nuclear power are considered cleaner.

But overall, driving an EV is still greener, even in coal-heavy areas.

"Study after study has shown that driving an electric vehicle, no matter the electricity grid mix, is significantly cleaner than a gasoline vehicle," Kathy Harris, Natural Resources Defense Council director for clean vehicles, said in a statement. "And, unlike other cars, electric vehicles actually get cleaner over time – as the dirtiest sources of electricity retire and new, clean energy gets hooked up to the grid. A cleaner grid means a cleaner EV."

Driving an EV sedan in some counties in hydroelectric-powered Oregon could mean a roughly 90 percent cut in emissions compared to a gas-powered SUV, according to an example from the study. In coal-powered Appalachian counties, EV sedans are still expected to produce 60 percent less in greenhouse gases than traditional gas-powered SUVs.

While EVs do not produce tailpipe emissions when driven, making the batteries is emissions-intensive. But those emissions pale in comparison to pollution caused by gas-powered vehicles on the road, according to the data.

"We acknowledge there are tradeoffs," Keoleian said. "But the overall benefit is overwhelming."

AUTO REVIEW

Three-row throwdown – Chevy Traverse vs. Ford Explorer vs. Honda Pilot

By HENRY PAYNE
The Detroit News (TNS)

After a weekend of racing sportscars across the plunging twists and turns of Pittsburgh International Raceway, my son and I crawled – exhausted – into our Honda Pilot SUV for the long five-hour ride home.

"Man, this car is so easy to drive," said my 34-year-old son. "It's so easy, a kid could drive it."

With the comfortable front thrones cradling his sore bones, he pressed the cool seats button, put his tall drink bottle in the side pocket, then pressed the steering wheel voice recognition button. "Go home," he said, and wireless Apple CarPlay app charted our course on Google Maps for the duration of our journey.

Midsize SUVs, you've come a long way, baby.

Utes have their origins in the early 1990s as Ford put an Explorer top hat on a truck chassis to satisfy families looking for a new breed of family station wagon. The idea took off along with other boxy, jacked wagons like the Grand Cherokee and Nissan Pathfinder and Chevy Trailblazer. Fast forward to today and the three-row SUV is in its prime.

I've driven the Pilot, Ford Explorer and Chevy Traverse – all Made in America – in recent months and they are three of the most capable Swiss Army knives in the U.S. market. No longer vanilla family haulers, these three-row limos are stuffed with style, character, power and tech. Crave a luxury SUV? Save $20K and buy one of these chariots instead.

They represent a segment teeming with talent, including the Mazda CX-90, Kia Telluride and Dodge Durango. How do Pilot, Explorer, Traverse stack up?

Looks

Mrs. Payne shies from minivans and rightly so – who would settle for a dorky van when you have these three SUV lookers on the lot?

My chiseled Pilot Black Edition, new for 2025, wore its black-trimmed, Sonic Gray Pearl trim like a tuxedo for the Oscars. Gloss black 20-inch wheels, black rocker panels, black mirror caps, Black Edition badging. Dude, you're from the same family that birthed the homely Fit?

The Traverse turns up the heat even further by taking its styling cues from the Silverado truck line. Tough grille, bold stance and a Z71 off-road package that leans into our obsession with America's natural wonders.

But it's the Explorer that wins the beauty contest. Draped over a longitudinal-engine, rear-wheel-drive-based platform (the Pilot and Traverse are on front-drive platforms), the athletic-looking Explorer pushes its wheels to the corners like a German SUV. Then it digs into sibling Mustang's wardrobe with dramatic scalloped flanks. Add the ST-Line's blacked-out wardrobe and it's no wonder Explorer is at the top of the sales board.

Drivability

All three utes have excellent ergonomics that make them more intuitive to drive than their luxury peers. Control buttons on the steering wheel are raised, so I could easily adjust radio volume and cruise control without taking my eyes off the road. The Chevy is the most ingenious as it adds a set of buttons on the back of the steering wheel so I could adjust volume (right hand) and toggle between radio station favorites (left hand).

The Traverse has also opened space on its console (for phones, storage) by moving the shifter to the steering column. This is no clunky ol' column stalk, but a compact electronic shifter shared with the Blazer EV. That said, the Honda's console-mounted, compact "trigger shifter" is the most intuitive of the three since it offers buttons for DRIVE, REVERSE, NEUTRAL. Place your fingers in the "trigger" slots and you can easily find your way through a tight parking lot. The Ford's rotary shifter may be compact, but it's also the busiest, given that you have to rotate it all-way-'round the horn to get from PARK to DRIVE and back again.

Pilot extends its excellent ergonomics to lots of storage cubbies (prized by families carrying electronics, candy bars, pacifiers, etc.) and the segment's easiest third-row access seat solution.

No one will buy a midsize ute for fun through the twisties, but Traverse shows off GM's top-drawer chassis and engine development. The three-row ute is not only the tightest of the three, but its crisp chassis and stonkin' 328-horsepower turbo-4 will give you added confidence on two-lane roads. Explorer also sports an impressive, throaty turbo-4, meaning that the Honda – despite possessing the only throaty V-6 of the group – is the least powerful at 285 horsepower.

Technology

This is where the game has really changed in three-row family land.

Traverse and Explorer sport first-class digital displays and tech goo-gaws. Both systems are run by Google Built-In – essentially the same operating system that powers Android phones – so that the big dash-mounted displays bear familiar, phone-like icons.

Honda is moving to Google Built-in as well, but for now, Pilot's graphics appear a generation behind even as they are easy to negotiate. Speaking of easy, Explorer oddly does not offer a head-up display like Pilot and Traverse – a driver-friendly feature that is indispensable once you've experienced it.

Where Explorer and Traverse really stretch their legs over the Honda, however, is with semi-autonomous driving systems. Chevy's Super Cruise and Ford's Blue Cruise are state-of-the-art systems that compete with luxury chariot-makers Tesla and Mercedes. Not only will these systems wow your kids, but they make long-distance road trips easier – not just reducing fatigue but also freeing your hands to, say, eat a Quarter Pounder.

Ford practically gives Blue Cruise away, but Chevy's $3,250 system is the segment leader. The Traverse system is the most consistent on highways, and will even work on some two-lane roads.

Conclusion

Our terrific trio of SUVs are not only packed with tech – wireless smartphone apps, blind spot-assist, adaptive cruise control, backup assist – but it all comes standard. Add attractive trims and extras like panoramic roofs, and these utes can be had for just over $50K.

My pick is the Chevy Multiverse – er, Traverse – by a nose, given its attention to detail. Deservingly, it received The Detroit News 2024 Vehicle of the Year award.

That attention to detail is also important given that new tech has eroded reliability in vehicles for the first time in JD Power's 40-year history of polling consumers. Chevy excels in JD Power's ratings with an 83 score over three years of ownership, outpacing Pilot's 71 and Explorer's 60.

Because when you plan a road trip to Beaver, Pennsylvania, the last place you want your SUV is in the shop.

Henry Payne is auto critic for The Detroit News.

2025 Chevrolet Traverse

★★★★

Vehicle type: Front-engine, front- and all-wheel-drive, six- or seven-passenger SUV

Powerplant: 2.5-liter turbocharged, inline-4 cylinder

Transmission: Eight-speed automatic

Price: $42,195 base, including $1,495 destination fee ($56,100 RS as tested)

Power: 328 horsepower, 326 pound-feet torque

Performance: 0-60 mph, 7.3 seconds (Car and Driver); towing capacity: 5,000 pounds

Weight: 4,793 pounds (AWD Traverse as tested)

Fuel economy: EPA est. 19 city/24 highway/21 combined (AWD Traverse as tested)

Report card

Highs: Handsome styling; Super Cruise

Lows: Coarse four-banger engine sound

2025 Ford Explorer

★★★★

Vehicle type: Front-engine, rear- and all-wheel-drive, six- or seven-passenger SUV

Price: $41,745 base, including $1,595 destination fee ($50,865 ST Line as tested)

Powerplant: 2.3-liter, turbocharged inline-4 cylinder

Transmission: 10-speed automatic

Power: 300 horsepower, 310 pound-feet torque (turbo-4)

Performance: 0-60 mph, NA; towing capacity: 5,000 pounds

Weight: 4,565 pounds (as tested)

Fuel economy: EPA est. 20 city/27 highway/23 combined (turbo-4 AWD)

Report card

Highs: High-tech interior; Blue Cruise

Lows: Clunky rotary shifter

2025 Honda Pilot

★★★★

Vehicle type: Front-engine, front- and all-wheel-drive seven-to-eight-passenger SUV

Price: $41,695, including $1,495 destination fee ($57,055 Black Edition as tested)

Powerplant: 3.5-liter V-6

Power: 285 horsepower, 262 pound-feet torque

Transmission: 10-speed automatic

Performance: 0-60 mph, 7.2 seconds (Car and Driver est.); towing, 5,000 pounds

Weight: 4,660 pounds (as tested)

Fuel economy: EPA est. mpg 19 city/27 highway/22 combined (FWD); 19 city/25 highway/21 combined (AWD)

Report card

Highs: Good third-row access, interior ergonomics; throaty V-6

Lows: Screen tech trails rivals; no hands-free driving option

TECHNOLOGY

GADGETS

Rugged Bluetooth speaker offers ‘floating playback’

Soundcore Boom 3i.

Soundcore / TNS

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service (TNS)

The latest and greatest in the world of portable Bluetooth speakers today might not make the cut tomorrow. Sound is the key feature, but what about size, waterproof rating and other factors?

Soundcore’s Boom 3i is designed for extreme outdoor conditions. Its IP68 waterproof/dust-proof rating allows it to withstand being fully submerged in water, withstanding submersion of up 4.92 feet for up to 30 minutes.

And it gets better. Soundcore touts the Boom 3i as the industry’s first with floating playback, so the speaker will auto-correct and stay upright, allowing the sound to be heard loud and clear, even in ocean waves. It will also survive small drops up to 3.28 feet onto concrete.

Its rugged casing and protective coating enable it to stay corrosion-free for up to 2 years of beach, boat and seaside use, according to specifications released by Soundcore.

As for the booming sound, it comes from a 3.7-by-2-inch woofer, combined with a 10W, 0.65-inch tweeter, as well as a pair of bass radiators, producing 96 dB of volume. BassUp 2.0 is activated with the press of a button, delivering up to twice the bass sound.

A feature that is new to me is Buzz Clean. When activated via the Soundcore companion app, it will shake off dust and debris to ensure crystal clear sound. The 8.27 x 3.35 x 3.09-inch Boom 3i provides 16 hours of playtime from a single USB-C charge, features Bluetooth v5.3 for TWS stereo pairing and includes a detachable shoulder strap. Internal lights on the ends of the speaker provide a user-programmable LED light show.

It’s available in four different color choices: black, blue, desert rose brown, and jungle green.

https://www.soundcore.com/products/d5100-boom-3i-waterproof-bluetooth-speaker $129.99

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IKEA, yes, that IKEA, has entered the world of Bluetooth speakers with the Nattbad. The recently launched AC-powered speaker has the design and look of an old radio, with a budget-friendly price point.

Music has never looked better, and with its catchy name, it seems Nattbad, or not bad at all. The speaker has a unique look: It has a rounded top, side to side, and a front-facing grill with the speaker positioned behind it.

Unlike many IKEA products, there’s no package of hardware with special screws and tools. The Nattbad Bluetooth speaker is built to work out of the box. Setup consists of plugging it in, turning it on, pairing it and then listening. The pairing button is on the back. Buttons for playing music and adjusting volume, as well as accessing Spotify, are on the front.

And as always, what’s important is the sound, and the Nattbad delivered a clear and loud sound, great for music and podcasts. It won’t be the life of the party, but it wasn’t meant to be. Instead, you get a good-looking speaker that features multi-speaker mode, and the Spotify Tap feature is a handy addition.

https://www.ikea.com/us/en/p/nattbad-bluetooth-speaker-black-40601603. $49.99, available in black, pink, and yellow

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Tribit’s StromBox Mini Plus is a true portable Bluetooth (5.4) speaker with its 4.6 inches high by 3.5 inches round, 19.2 ounce compact size. Inside, the sound is produced by two 48mm full-range drivers, a passive radiator, and 12 watts of output power. The speaker’s body features a grill that extends the entire way around, allowing for 360-degree sound.

The resulting sound is impressive considering the size; you get clear, dynamic 2.0 stereo sound. It will play for approximately 12 hours at 50 percent volume before a USB-C charge is required. The sound can be tuned to personal preferences with the Tribit app. There are five audio presets or manual EQ adjustments.

True wireless sound can be achieved by pairing two StromBox Mini plus speakers, and there are also Built-in multicolor lights for a light show. It has an IPX7 waterproof rating, allowing it to be submerged in water for up to 30 minutes at a depth of 1 meter (40 inches). Internal microphones enable hands-free calls, and a 3.5 mm auxiliary port allows you to connect devices directly.

https://tribit.com/products/tribit-stormbox-mini-plus-portable-bluetooth-speaker 39.99, available in black, blue, and green

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Skullcandy’s Terrain Mini is also portable (4.1 by 3.5 by 3.5 inches, and 12.7 ounces), enabling you to take the music with you.

Inside the cube-shaped Bluetooth 5.3 speaker is a 48mm driver producing powerful sound. It’s fully waterproof and rugged with an IPX7 rating and comes with a wrist strap. It is rated to play for up to 14 hours, depending on the battery life, and it charges with the included USB-C cable.

The sound has an emphasis on bass and highs, but overall is solid. On-board buttons control everything you need, including power, volume, and music selections. And if you choose to purchase up to 99 additional Terrain Mini speakers, they can be connected for a unique, loud, and spread out true wireless stereo sound.

The Terrain Mini is available in two colors: triple threat ocean and black, for $41.99. Additionally, there are five limited edition colors, ranging from $41.99 to $59.99.

https://www.skullcandy.com/products/terrain-mini-wireless-bluetooth-speaker

Contact Gregg Ellman at greggellman@mac.com. Follow him on Twitter @greggellman.

LEFT: Tribit StromBox Mini Plus.

Tribit / TNS

BELOW: Skullcandy Terrain Mini.

Skullcandy / TNS

IKEA Nattbad.

IKEA / TNS

Browser password managers are convenient, but risky

By JIM ROSSMAN
Tribune News Service (TNS)

I’ve been having some conversations with people online and in person about using and storing passwords.

I’m like most of you, in that I don’t have one solution.

I utilize several options that include a password manager, having a browser to remember some passwords and writing them down in a secured file saved in the cloud.

I also have a lot of passwords to remember for my work life, which is entirely separate from my home internet use.

The conversations this week revolved around the safety of letting your browser fill in your passwords.

How safe is it? (Spoiler … not very safe)

Every browser has its own way of keeping your logins and passwords secure. I use Google Chrome, but Microsoft Edge and Mozilla Firefox do pretty much the same thing.

The consensus is that storing your passwords in a browser is convenient, but also quite risky. Also, if you create an account and sign in to the browsers, you can choose to sync those passwords to the cloud so they’ll be available if you log into that same browser on a different computer or tablet or phone. Again, convenient, but risky.

Browsers are notoriously at risk of leaking your data through exploitable vulnerabilities. I’m not sure most people are aware that browsers like Chrome issue major updates monthly, with minor updates even more often.

Most of the time, those updates happen in the background, but they can’t be fully applied unless you quit and relaunch the browser. This is why it is very critical that you keep current on your browser updates.

Everyone must weigh their tolerance for risk versus convenience when dealing with their online lives.

My thought is to let the browser remember my login and password information on sites that don’t utilize any financial information.

I don’t mind letting Chrome remember my New York Times login, but I certainly don’t have it filling out my online banking logins or even my shopping accounts like Amazon.

If the account deals with any of my money, I don’t let the browser remember anything, including the username.

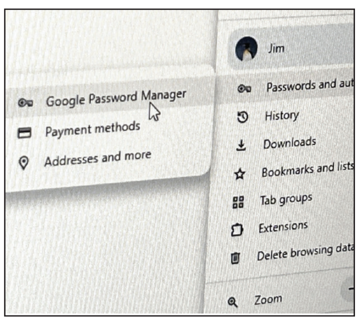
Also, I’ve mentioned this before, but it bears repeating – please turn on two-factor authentication when it is offered.

Two-factor authentication adds a second layer of security to your accounts by requiring two methods of authentication before allowing access.

To put it simply, using two-factor authentication means entering your login name, password and then having a code sent to your phone that you enter on the screen. This means you not only know the login credentials but have possession of your phone as well.

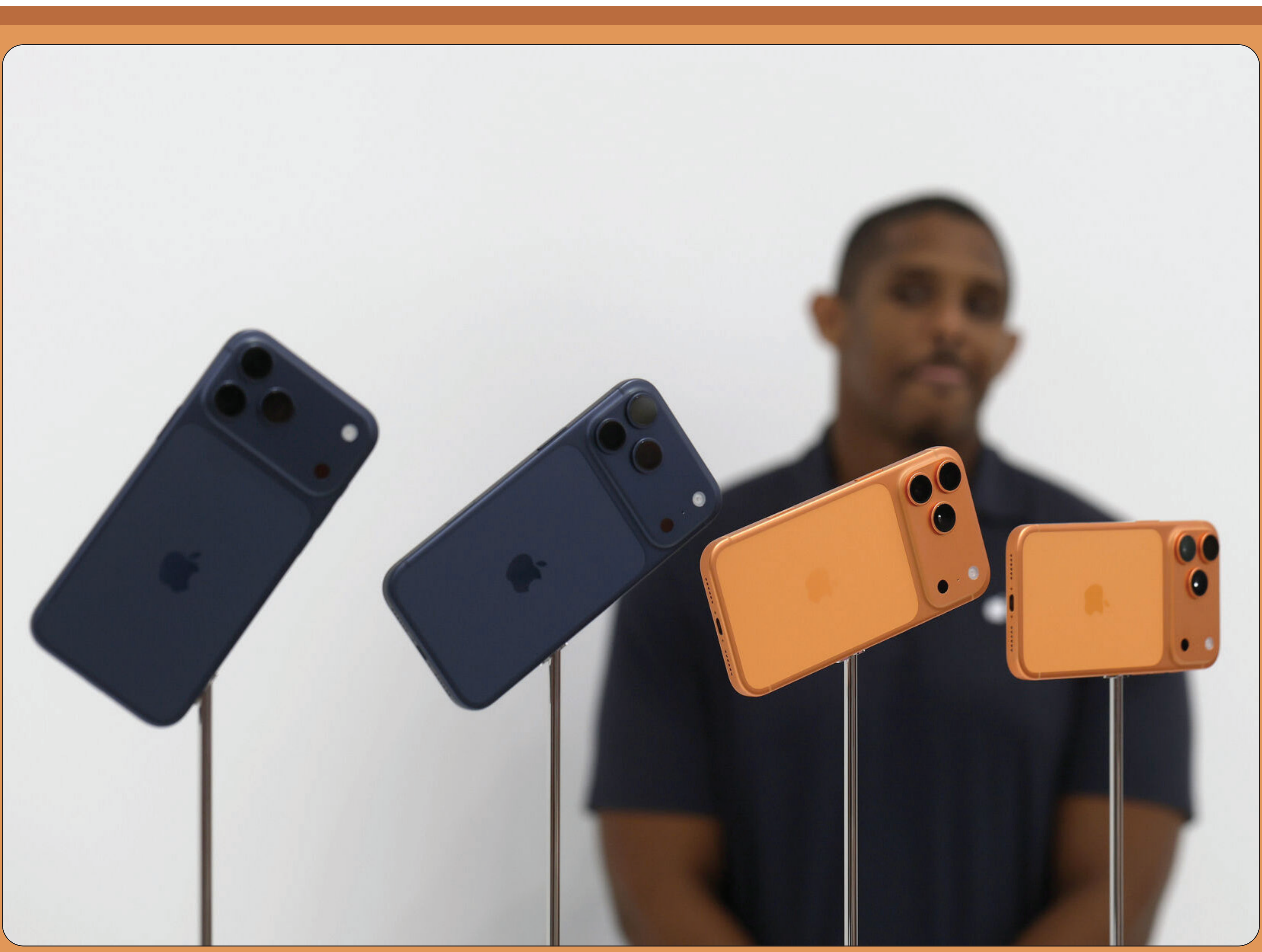
If a hacker manages to steal your password, they will still need your phone to finish the login.

Jim Rossman is a tech columnist for Tribune News Service. He may be reached at jrossmantechadviser@gmail.com.



Jim Rossman / TNS

I utilize several options that include a password manager, having a browser to remember some passwords and writing them down in a secured file saved in the cloud.



Justin Sullivan / Getty Images / TNS

The new Apple iPhone 17 Pro is displayed during an Apple special event at Apple headquarters on Sept. 9 in Cupertino, California. Apple unveiled a new generation of iPhones, updated Apple Watches, and AirPods during a special event at its headquarters.

Apple’s iPhone 17 line could be the refresh upgraders were waiting for

By CHRIS WELCH and SAMANTHA KELLY
Bloomberg News (TNS)

After years of incremental refreshes, Apple Inc.’s iPhone lineup feels exciting again.

The company introduced four new phone models on Sept. 9: the basic iPhone 17, the superthin Air, the high-end 17 Pro and the supersized 17 Pro Max. All of them include Apple’s latest in-house silicon, more advanced cameras and tougher outer glass. For consumers who try to delay iPhone upgrades until they can buy a new edition that looks meaningfully different, this could be the year – especially now that Apple has confirmed the prices are mostly in line with last year’s versions.

All of the new iPhones are available as of Sept. 19. While the starting prices are largely the same as before, the iPhone 17 Pro now starts at $1,099, up $100 from last year. (To be fair, it now comes with 256 gigabytes of storage and matches the price of the 256GB iPhone 16 Pro.)

Bloomberg had a chance to briefly try the new handsets, along with the company’s new AirPods Pro earbuds and Apple Watches, during its media event. Here are our first impressions:

iPhones

The regular iPhone 17, which starts at $799, has a larger screen (6.3 inches, up from 6.1 on the iPhone 16) with a faster 120-hertz refresh rate, making for noticeably smoother everyday use. While not all consumers will care, for the sort of tech enthusiasts who are attuned to specifications like these, everything from scrolling emails to playing games feels more responsive on the new iPhone 17 compared with the 60-hertz iPhone 16.

The standard iPhone 17 also brings an improved rear camera and a vastly better selfie camera that will likely be a welcome upgrade for mainstream consumers. But in terms of hardware design, it’s the most familiar-looking of the bunch. There are some fresh colors to choose from, though, including lavender, sage and “mist blue.”

Apple’s more exciting changes come with the iPhone Air, measuring just 5.6 millimeters thick, and the more technologically advanced Pro models, which feature a completely overhauled design with an aluminum unibody frame.

The Air dominated media coverage ahead of the event, after Bloomberg first reported that Apple was planning to launch a superthin handset. Weighing only 165 grams, it feels incredibly lightweight in-hand. (The Galaxy S25 Edge from rival Samsung Electronics Co. is a couple grams lighter.)

The Air seems futuristic in a way that devices rarely do when they’ve merely received minor updates between generations. A few minutes of handling the phone confirmed that, as with the Galaxy S25 Edge, the main benefit isn’t necessarily the thinness: It’s having such a large display in a phone that won’t call attention to itself in your pocket.

Still, there are reasons to be skeptical about its battery life – despite Apple’s assurances that the phone can last all day on a charge. And there are other compromises, too: The iPhone Air has just a single rear camera, though you can crop in for 2x portrait photos. It’s also the first iPhone that Apple will sell globally that only supports eSIM connectivity to wireless networks.

If the Air is a nod to the future, the iPhone 17 Pro and Pro Max are a showcase for what Apple can achieve with a thicker, more conventional form factor. Both should be popular choices. Apple’s new unibody design offers some of the most comfortable ergonomics of any recent iPhone. The edges are slightly more rounded, striking the right balance between the squared-off design of recent models and older iPhones with fully rounded sides. The rear cutout area where the aluminum meets the glass back – necessary for wireless charging – isn’t as noticeable as you might expect.

One upgrade that received little attention during the keynote is a new antireflective coating on the Pro models’ display that drastically cuts down on glare. This is a quality-of-life improvement that buyers should appreciate once they see it in person.

It’s a similar story on the back side of the device, where the lighter shades are essentially smudge-proof since there’s no more glossy glass anywhere on the back, and aluminum handles fingerprints better than the titanium on recent Pros.

As for the color options, the new orange hue is striking, but the silver and “deep blue” Pro phones also look great.

Apple watches

Apple also unveiled three new Apple watches: the budget SE ($249), the Series 11 ($399) and high-end Apple Watch Ultra 3 ($799). On the surface, these products may not seem that different than their predecessors, but Apple is hoping a few minor design changes and a bigger push around health tracking features will win over both new buyers and existing owners who’ve sat out recent upgrade cycles.

The SE, which hadn’t been updated since 2022, has Apple’s S10 processor, along with an always-on display, faster charging, optional 5G connectivity and hand-control gestures, like flicking away notifications. There are also more wellness features, including wrist-temperature monitoring and sleep apnea tracking. (Many of these features were previously on older, high-end models.)

The SE in many ways feels similar to the new Series 11 watch – and when laid side by side next to the Series 10 in Apple’s demo room, it was hard to tell them apart if not for the wristbands. That’s significant considering the price difference between the two lines.

The Series 11 brings fewer visible changes, but its internal upgrades include a promise of as much as 24 hours of battery life (up from 18) hours, optional 5G, tougher glass and a new sleep score feature. That tool factors in data such as sleep duration, bedtime consistency, how often you wake up and time spent in each sleep stage. It’s not unlike what’s already available from companies like Garmin Ltd., Whoop Inc. and Oura Health Oy.

Apple is also adding the ability to detect signs of chronic high blood pressure over a 30-day period. Apple said this hypertension tool will come later this month to 150 countries and regions, including the U.S. and the EU. The feature is still awaiting approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and other regulators, the company added. The hypertension detection also comes to the Series 9 and Ultra 2.

The Apple Watch Ultra 3 is the first new Ultra-series timepiece in two years, and it comes with slightly slimmer bezels. It also adds satellite connectivity, which should be attractive to the sort of hikers and outdoor adventurers that this product is marketed toward. Additionally, it touts improved battery life of as much as 42 hours with more standard usage, or a maximum of 72 hours in low-power mode. Still, that falls short of the claims Garmin is making with its most comparable rugged watches, which in some cases can last several weeks on a charge, according to the company. (That said, Garmin’s new Fenix 8 Pro starts at a much-pricier $1,200.)

AirPods Pro 3

Apple also announced the third-generation AirPods Pro earbuds, the first update that product line has seen in three years. The upgraded earbuds have a slightly smaller design and now use foam ear tips for a more secure fit. (Apple is now including an increased selection of five sizes in the box so the earbuds will fit more people.)

In briefly trying out the new earbuds, the foam ear tips made a noticeable improvement to the overall fit and blocked out more ambient noise.

The AirPods Pro 3 also have active noise cancellation that Apple says is twice as powerful as the previous-generation model and four times better than the original from 2019. It was difficult to assess sound quality during the brief media demo, but the noise cancellation did manage to almost completely silence the bustling surroundings.

From Dreamstime / TNS

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

Five *perfect* weekend trips to take this fall

By NIKKI EKSTEIN
Bloomberg News (TNS)

Call it foliage season, shoulder season, Q3 or plain old fall: It's the best time of year for big cities and big adventures, and it's coming up fast. In any constantly evolving metropolis, this is when restaurant rows and museum miles flash with glitzy new openings and exhibits, all of them ready to capture a local population that's spent the last few months decamped somewhere else.

And autumn is your best chance to get better-than-summer weather in many beachy getaway spots – without peak summer pricing. That may be truer than ever this year, as global tourism contracts on the heels of tariffs and broader economic uncertainty.

If you want to be in the right place at the right time, look no further: Here are five perfect-for-fall escapes pulled from our master list of where to travel in 2025. As a bonus, they're all doable as long weekends from a wide variety of U.S. and European cities.

The Kolymbithres beach on Paros Island, Cyclades, Greece.

Upper East Side, Manhattan

In New York City, uptown has been downtown-ified. Madison Avenue, once the exclusive domain of rarified labels and shoppers in red-soled shoes, has seen Covid-era store closures get filled in with youthful brands such as LA-import Violet Gray and flagships of of-the-moment brands like L'Agence. Unlike other prime shopping neighborhoods, which feel aggressively packed with an outpost of every brand you've ever heard of, the UES feels curated. You'll actually enjoy yourself as you stock up on Khaite trench coats, Still Here denim and Gorjana charm bracelets.

The restaurant scene here has never been more exciting (just try to nab a reservation at Chez Fifi, Le Veau d'Or or Le Café Louis Vuitton). And on the hotel front, what's old is new again. The excellent Surrey is now a Corinthia hotel, with an outpost of Miami's beloved Casa Tua restaurant bringing social buzz (and so many Chanel handbags) to the first floor. Stretch the neighborhood's boundaries a smidge to include the just-redone Waldorf Astoria on 50th Street – it's a worthy reboot of the city's most iconic stay, complete with a new restaurant by Gramercy Tavern's Michael Anthony.

Don't forget the area's art institutions, which are worth a revisit even if you've been many times. The Metropolitan Museum of Art has just reopened its renovated Rockefeller Wing, for instance, featuring new collections that highlight work from Africa, the ancient Americas and Oceania. And the Frick has reopened this year after a five-year, $330 million renovation that (among other draws) reinstated a pair of grand gardens and added a spectacular new auditorium for intimate concerts.

Paros and Antiparos, Greece

Let it serve as a sign of the times that one of the hottest amenities for Mykonos resorts this summer – besides a Missoni-branded beach club, natch – was a fleet of speedboats to take guests to neighboring Paros. That's how much buzz has built around this rising star of an island, and its little sister, Antiparos, in the last year alone. (Don't just take our word for it; American Express Travel put Paros on its list of hot destinations for 2025 this summer, based on how many of its cardholders were racing to book trips to the island.) Drawing people there are the holy trinity of Greek vacation attractions: Perfectly clear-watered beaches, cross-island breezes ideal for kitesurfing, and traditional whitewashed architecture.

And if Paros and Antiparos used to be a lower-priced alternatives to their iconically nightlife-packed neighbor, those values are evaporating as the island's cultural clout soars. Take the Rooster, Antiparos' most sought-after hotel: Rooms are going for $2,500 per night in the middle of September. That particular property closes for the season by the time October rolls around, but many others now stay open. Included in that set is Parilo, a Design Hotel with 33 minimalist-boho suites that can be booked beginning at just $370 per night through October 25. (Its restaurant is a destination unto itself, having earned two Michelin stars and a Michelin Green star for its zero-waste, ethically sourced approach to local Greek cuisine.) Book it with Marriott Bonvoy points for an even better deal.

London

The energy in London this year has coalesced in a surprising area: All along the Elizabeth tube line. But nothing is poised to be as game-changing as the hulking, Eero Saarinen-designed U.S. Embassy in Grosvenor Square, reborn in late August as the 144-room Chancery Rosewood. Around its massive perimeter, looking out onto leafy Mayfair, is a quiver of ultracool restaurants like the Avro-Ko-designed brasserie Serra and outposts of New York institutions Carbone and Masa. (Local culinary legend Ruth Rogers is also said to be opening a venue, and there's a cafe serving floral-inspired creations by pastry chef Marius Dufay.) The rooftop is home to the Eagle Bar, so named for the way its oversized windows look out past the giant gilded bird that crowns the hotel's port cochere and towards Hyde Park. It's fast becoming the most coveted spot for after-work drinks, complete with a sprawling outdoor terrace and a menu by talented NoMad vet Liana Oster.

Rome

You'd think Italy's fashionistas would have a hard time shifting their center of gravity anywhere south, north, west or east of Milan. And yet in 2025, fashion houses such as Dolce & Gabbana and Dior are using this year's Vatican Jubilee as one of many excuses to move their runway shows to the Eternal City. Some 30 million visitors were originally expected to visit Rome during the papal celebration – not including the couture chasers. And that number has likely grown considering that some 250,000 people turned up just to see white smoke rise from the Vatican chimneys in early May.

Consider the fall months a reprieve from all of that hubbub: This is when you can get a prime restaurant reservation without waking up at the crack of dawn exactly three months in advance to book it, and it's when hotel rates fall in step with the crowds. Plus, the year's biggest hotel openings – like the Romeo Roma and Orient Express La Minerva – have now had a few months to iron out their kinks. And all of the infrastructure investments meant to support the big events, from a new metro line to renovations at Piazza Navona, have duly removed their scaffolding.

Canary Islands

Sometimes it's easy to identify why a destination is buzzing (see above). Other times there's just something in the air. That's the case with the sun-smacked, palm-studded Canary Islands, a mountains-and-beach destination where more and more jetsetters in our orbit seem to be going, even though the hotels we were excited about in 2025 have all been mysteriously delayed. Regardless, some 44 new hotels – or 6,000 new rooms – are in the pipeline across this seven-island Spanish archipelago of the western coast of Africa, all scheduled to pop by 2028, so there's clear reason to believe the trendline is ascendant.

But that growth includes megaprojects that will change the face of their surroundings. Take the latest project in Gran Canaria by the Spain-based Lopesan Group: It consists of a whopping 1,800 rooms across nearly 70 acres. The project is estimated to cost around $787 million. It all points towards a tourism development boom that locals fear is going unchecked. That may make it wise to go now, before it's spoiled. Bonus: The fall weather here is effectively an extension of everyone else's summer.

TRAVEL TIPS

These U.S. airports offer most affordable international flights

In the hunt for affordable international flights, many travelers are willing to switch their airline or destination to the cheapest options available. But have you ever thought of switching up your departure airport to find a more affordable fare?

That could be the secret to scoring more consistent deals on international flights, according to a new report. Flight deal site Going.com has released new data analyzing the United States airports that have offered the most – and the best – flight deals throughout the past year. To make the rankings, Going analyzed the more than 80,000 flight deals it sent its users, which departed from 200 airports around the U.S. on dozens of airlines.

The airports offering the most deals are located all over the country, meaning the perfect affordable fare to your dream destination abroad could be a short drive, train ride, or connecting flight away. Here's a look at the U.S. airports with the most flight deals, on both international and domestic routes.

U.S. airports with the best international flight deals

According to Going's data, travelers in Florida and New York have access to the best flight deals on international routes. The top three airports offering the best deals are:

- Orlando International Airport (MCO), with an average discounted fare of $418.12 or 48 percent off
- Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR), with an average discounted fare of $437.93 or 52 percent off
- New York John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), with an average discounted fare of $442.08 or 52 percent off

U.S. airports with the most international flight deals

All three of the airports with the most flight deals on international routes are major airline hubs "with broad international networks, ongoing route expansion, and recent infrastructure upgrades," according to Going. Each airport had more than six international flight deals per week in the Going app, with discounts ranging from 40 percent to 90 percent off.

- New York John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK)
- Boston Logan International Airport (BOS)
- Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)
- In addition to a high volume of deals, the airports also offered deeply discounted fares over the last year, including:
- JFK to Florence, Italy, for just $344 on ITA Airways; a discount of 63 percent off
- BOS to Mykonos, Greece, for only $468 on British Airways; a discount of 52 percent off
- LAX to Tulum, Mexico, for only $271 on American Airlines; a discount of 56 percent off
- In addition to international routes, Going's report also looked at the airports offering the best deals on domestic flights, too.
- U.S. airports with the best domestic flight deals
- Salt Lake City International Airport (SLC), with an average discounted fare of $146.28 or 45 percent off
- Tampa International Airport (TPA), with an average discounted fare of $150.67 or 46 percent off
- Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL), with an average discounted fare of $153.13 or 47 percent off

"These airports have consistently offered some of the best-priced flights for a variety of reasons," said Going travel expert Katy Nastro. "With Salt Lake City's rapid growth and new airline additions, Tampa's billion-dollar expansion, and growing low-cost carrier competition at the world's busiest airport, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta. They've all helped get people going more affordably."

U.S. airports with the most domestic flight deals

The three airports with the most deals on flights within the U.S. averaged nearly three flight deals per week in Going's app, with discounts ranging from 40 percent to 90 percent off. Those three hubs were:

- Tampa International Airport (TPA)
- Orlando International Airport (MCO)
- Denver International Airport (DEN)

According to the report, each airport has strong service from low-cost airlines, which drives down their average airfare. The best domestic deal at each airport was:

- TPA to Boston for $77 round trip on JetBlue
- MCO to Raleigh for $58 round trip on Breeze Airways
- DEN to Indianapolis for $53 round trip on Southwest

– Jessica Puckett / TravelPulse (TNS)